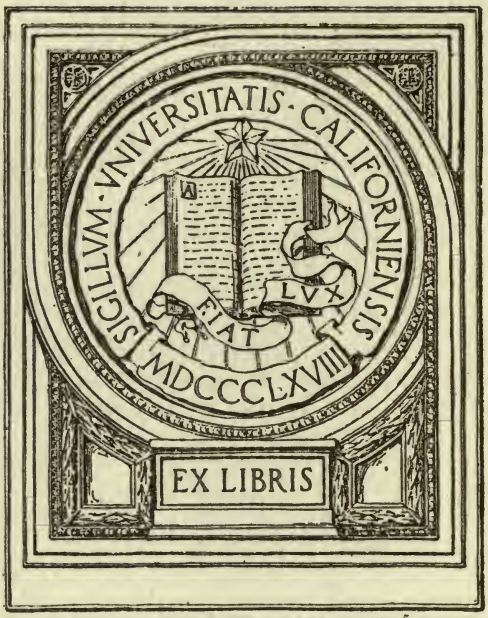
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TWENTY YEARS IN ROUMANIA

TWENTY YEARS IN ROUMANIA

BY

MAUDE PARKINSON

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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PREFACE

NOW that I have set down in black and white these random impressions and recollections of a country in which I spent many of the happiest years of my life, a slight feeling of doubt assails me. Might my Roumanian friends possibly find cause for offence in the freedom which I have allowed myself? Then I remember that they have a sense of humour, and the doubt vanishes.

If I deal frankly with some of the methods and customs of the country, it is because I hope to give English readers an insight into the character of the people, and enable them to find there, as I have found, a very great deal to love.

When, after my long absence from England, I compare our own methods and ways of thought with those which have become so familiar to me in Roumania, the latter do not always suffer in the comparison. Indeed, if I wrote about some of the things which have especially struck me since my return, I might arouse a good deal of resentment.

Some of the best friends I have in the world are Roumanians. The kindness and sympathy they showed me during a time of great sorrow in my life must be an enduring memory. Rather than be suspected of repaying such kindness by holding up my friends to ridicule, I would tear up these pages

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which I—a tyro in the art of letters—have written with so much labour, but also, I must add, with so much pleasure.

After completing my education in Germany, I spent some time very happily in Vienna with friends who were well acquainted with Roumania.

I became fascinated by their descriptions of life in a country which for me had something of the glamour of the Orient, and so, armed with letters of introduction, I proceeded to Bucarest and soon established myself as a teacher of languages. For the twenty-two following years of my life I lived in Roumania; but for the war I should probably be there now.

My relations with my pupils, members of the best-known families in the country, were always of the pleasantest, and as Roumanians have a natural aptitude for languages, there was no drudgery in the teaching.

Since I left the country Roumania has come through a time of terrible trial.

My heart has often been wrung by the accounts of the sufferings of my friends; but even during the darkest days of the war I was sustained by the knowledge that they never once lost courage. They displayed a spirit as indomitable as our own, and now I rejoice that their fiery trial is over, and that the dawn of a glorious day has arrived.

MAUDE REA PARKINSON.

ARMAGH, 1921.

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TWENTY YEARS IN ROUMANIA

CHAPTER I

A real enterprise—The glamour of the *Arabian Nights*—Off to an unknown country—Light on the way—A friend at Court—I figure as a Nihilist—The Hungarian "express"—Wild men in sheep-skins—An intruder routed—Bucarest, a dreadful town—Adventures by flood and street—A warm reception.

WHEN I announced my intention of going to Roumania, I occasioned real consternation amongst my friends. "Why, you must be quite mad to think of going so far away to a country of which nobody knows anything at all!" was one of the mildest criticisms of my project.

The year was 1889—more than thirty years ago; and thirty years is not only a long period in the life of an individual, but it may make momentous changes in the story of a nation or of a country.

I will confess that it did seem a rash undertaking for a girl to venture so far afield into the unknown; but the enterprise had no terrors for me. I was already an accomplished traveller. I had "finished" at Magdeburg, visited Paris and Brussels, and spent more than a year in Vienna. I had been used to speaking French and German rather than English for several years; and, for the rest, I was an Irish girl, and timidity is not a fault which I have ever heard charged against the people of my

country. Then, again, I did know something about Roumania, if my friends did not. It was very little indeed, I grant, but it was enough to make me anxious to learn more. Some Viennese acquaintances of mine had visited Bucarest, and from them I had gained an alluring impression of a wonderful race of people, rich in the primitive virtues, dwelling in a charming country and amidst scenes of Oriental luxury. I will frankly admit that the glamour of the *Arabian Nights* was over all my thoughts and ideas about Roumania. Perhaps I was not so very far astray.

My intention was to establish myself in Bucarest in an independent way as a teacher of languages. I felt that I was pretty well equipped for the work, and I had been told that there was ample scope for my endeavour, and that I would find the remuneration far more liberal than nearer home.

This was all very encouraging, but with the canniness becoming an Ulsterwoman I determined to secure a definite engagement, so that I might find a footing in the country. I was at this time at home in Ireland, and I wrote to the best-known agencies in London. None of them could help me. They all seemed to have the haziest kind of ideas about Roumania. One agent wrote to say that they only covered Europe in their work! Even at that time it was against my will that I was obliged to apply to Germany, but in the event it was a Dresden agency which procured for me an appointment at a private school in Bucarest.

It was necessary for me to proceed to Dresden in order to conclude the agreement, and I was astonished to find that I could obtain no information

there as to how I should get to Roumania. Even at the hotel I was informed that there was no train communication with the remote place, and that I should be obliged to journey down the Danube. Indeed, the information given me was so vague and contradictory that I began to feel just a trifle nervous. Once started, however, nothing short of some convulsion of nature on my line of route (when discovered) could have deterred me. Besides, I looked for help in Vienna, whither I was bound in response to an invitation from a family with whom I had resided for some time as governess. The family—that of Colonel von Walzel—remained my lifelong friends, and many long and happy visits have I paid them during the years that have passed since then. Let me just say here that Austrians are *not* Germans; I shall offer evidence of this further on. Colonel von Walzel was an important official of the Court Chamberlain's Department under Prince Hohenlohe, and I may remark in passing that on my innumerable journeys to and fro during these long years, I have never paid a halfpenny for railway fare when passing through Austrian territory. That is an advantage of having —as I very literally had—a friend at Court, for Colonel von Walzel always provided me with a first-class pass. I had many other privileges in Vienna, not the least of which was a box at the opera whenever I wanted one. It has nothing to do with my present story, but perhaps it might be well for me to refer here to a matter which might, conceivably, sometime occasion a misunderstanding. Colonel von Walzel's brother is a well-known playwright, and was always a very good friend of

mine. In one of his dramas, popular quite recently, there figures a Russian Nihilist Princess who desires to pass as an Englishwoman. The author may have meant to pay me a compliment or he may simply have had little acquaintance with English nomenclature, but at any rate he made his Princess call herself "Maude Parkinson," and I have been told that my poor name has become quite familiar amongst the play-loving Viennese as typifying a certain kind of feminine subtlety which I cannot claim to possess.

Furnished with full instructions (and a free pass to the confines of Austro-Hungarian territory), I resumed my journey eastward. Travelling through Hungary is never very pleasant or interesting, and I soon grew tired of it, though my pass procured for me great deference everywhere. It became very monotonous on that long journey, gazing out of a window at a never-changing panorama of maize flats, with here and there a field of other grain. The wayside stations brought some relief, for here there were crowds of wild-looking unkempt natives dancing and singing to the invariable accompaniment of a mouth organ! These rude scenes led me to think that I was in truth leaving civilisation behind.

The train—which was an express from Vienna—slackened its pace so much after leaving Budapest that I mortally offended the guard by asking him in all good faith if it were a slow train. He replied in a very dignified manner, "Why, of *course* it is an express; we have travelled—so many—kilometres since leaving Budapest." I was not convinced of the speed of the train, as it is a well-known fact that Hungarian trains are the slowest in Europe. I have

heard that a line running out of London contests this claim, but I have not sufficient information on the subject to institute a comparison.

When we reached the Roumanian frontier I really became a little alarmed for the first time. It was in the early hours of the morning, when one's courage is at zero, and the crowds of strange-looking beings, clad in woolly sheep-skins, which thronged the station, appeared to me like denizens of another or an earlier world. Nevertheless, I was at once reminded of the old Irish jingle about Bryan O'Lynn, who'd "no breeches to wear, so he bought a sheep's skin to make him a pair."

Our luggage was examined here, and afterwards I returned to the ladies' compartment in which I had been travelling, and which I shared with another. I fell asleep again, but just before dawn some slight noise disturbed me, and I opened my eyes to find a man seated in a corner of the carriage and calmly regarding us. I opened my mouth almost as soon as my eyes, and indignantly informed him in English, French, and German that he was in a ladies' carriage, and had better get out of it as quickly as ever he could. Which language it was that frightened him I cannot tell; it may have been the tone of my address, but at any rate he fairly bolted.

We entered Bucarest by Verciorova, and my first impressions were disheartening. There was nothing about the surrounding country to prepossess me in its favour. It was flat and uninteresting, just like Hungary. The peasants who swarmed about were wild-looking and very dirty. My fellow-passenger had strongly advised me to go straight to the British Minister and present my credentials, and I

had a good mind to follow her advice. However, I did not immediately do so.

There had been some mistake about the hour of my arrival, and so no one met me at the station. I procured a carriage, and handed the address to the driver.

"What a dreadful town!" I thought, as I was driven at a speed reminiscent of the Dublin jarvey through narrow, atrociously paved streets, filled—both as to road and footway—with half-melted snow. The month was February, and when I arrived the climatic conditions were at their worst, which was pretty bad in Bucarest. Some of the streets were quite unpaved; few, apparently, had any system of drainage, for extensive floods frequently rendered the roadway impassable for foot passengers.

Later on I heard the story of an adventure which befell an English lady—also a teacher—just before my arrival. She had been giving lessons in a Jewish family who were reluctant payers, and had been obliged to demand her money with some firmness. Out of spite they paid her the amount—a considerable sum—in copper coins! which taxed the resources of an unusually large bag. Confronted with a street in flood, and hampered by her unwieldy wealth, she found herself at a twilight hour in an awkward predicament. Not a carriage was in sight. She appealed to a sturdy youth who was passing, and offered him a reward if he would carry her across the street. The boy promptly picked her up (she was a little woman), bag and all, but in mid-stream—or street—she attempted to change her bag from one hand to the other. The swinging

weight robbed the boy of his centre of gravity, and he and his fair burden fell floundering in the flood. He fished her out again and carried her ashore before searching for the treasure. This, however, he was fortunate enough to recover, and honest enough to return, receiving an ample reward for his pains.

My first impression of the school was not such as to cure me of the slight feeling of homesickness which I had now begun to experience. My arrival did not coincide with any meal-time—it was about 11 a.m.; and, as they have no idea of providing a decent repast at any unscheduled hour, I was shown into a workhouse-looking apartment with white bare walls and regaled with shocking bad coffee and a hunk of dry bread.

There was no lack of warmth, however, in Madame ——'s reception of me. She embraced me most effusively, and kissed me on both cheeks. Indeed, I may say at once that no matter what causes for complaint I may later on have found at this school, I always met with great kindness from the principal. This, however, was only in accordance with all my later experiences, as she was a native of Roumania.

The school was a large one, of about four hundred pupils, and there was a large staff of teachers of all nationalities. I refer to some of my experiences in a later chapter of this book.

Such was the manner of my coming to Bucarest; and how little I imagined then that I should grow to love the country and its people, and to make my home amongst them for so many years of my life!

CHAPTER II

Hazy ideas about Roumania—"Bucarest, Turkey"—A letter for Sinaia goes to Simla—The physical features of the country—Its mineral wealth—The chief towns—The Cernavoda Bridge—The railways and the scenery through which they pass—The mighty Danube—The Iron Gates.

IN the preceding chapter I have given some indication of how little was known of Roumania a quarter of a century ago, but it is still more astonishing to find in these days of enlightenment what hazy ideas people in this country have about the land and its inhabitants.

I received a letter once addressed to "Bucarest, Turkey." Staying for a few weeks one summer at Sinaia, a letter was sent to me from England addressed simply "Sinaia." When it reached me some months later, the envelope was a curiosity. I still keep it as a proof of the perseverance of post-office officials. It bears the post-marks of Italy, Switzerland, Turkey—and, all these failing, it had been despatched to Simla!

I cannot say that when at school I found geography the fascinating study which it really is; but that was due to the method of teaching. There was no attempt made by the instructor to capture the youthful imagination; the teacher had never ventured abroad, and was destitute of the stimulus which travel gives.

During my long residence I visited most parts of Roumania, some of them over and over again, and I think I may justly claim to have a very good knowledge of the country, of its physical features, its resources, and all the other information which one may find set forth, for the most part uninterestingly, in the geography books. It is only right that our ideas of Roumania should now assume more definite and reliable shape, and I think that interest is at last being awakened regarding our brave little ally and all concerning her. I sincerely hope to interest my readers in the Roumanian people, and—though I am aware that I run a risk of becoming a little tedious—I feel it my duty to supply at the outset a slight sketch of the country which they inhabit.

The area of Roumania before the war was about equal to that of England, but its population was less than that of London.

At that time the northern boundaries were Transylvania, Bukowina, and Bessarabia, whilst it was bounded on the west by Serbia.

Now Transylvania has been absorbed, and the northern boundaries of Roumania are formed by the Dniester and the frontiers of Galicia and Czecho-Slovakia. The western boundaries are Hungary and Jugo-Slavia.

Roumania is now, as hitherto, bounded on the east by the Black Sea and on the south by Bulgaria.

The rivers, of which there are several, take their rise in the Carpathians, and after traversing the country empty themselves into the Danube. These rivers are mostly very shallow, and half dry during the summer. Very few of them are navigable—

indeed, only the Pruth, the Bistritza, and the mighty Danube,—of which more hereafter. The rivers are well stocked with many varieties of fish, the sturgeon, carp, salmon, pike, and perch being the most important. I think I have sampled every kind of fish these waters have to offer, and I may here mention the Roumanian grey caviar, which is coarse-grained, when contrasted with Russian caviar, but to my mind, when properly prepared, is much more delicious. It has a peculiar, soft, pleasant flavour which is entirely lacking in the Russian.

The scenery in the Carpathians is very beautiful and at many points even imposing; the principal peaks are the Omul, Verful co dor, and the Caraiman.

Rough mountain ponies are used in summer for the ascent of these peaks. These animals are strong and wiry, but their equipment is anything but comfortable. The peasants, from whom they are hired, provide nothing for the tourists but rough wooden saddles, therefore rugs, cushions, etc., have to be provided if one wishes to ride in comfort.

On the slopes of the Carpathians there are rocks composed of sandstone, limestone, and even marble of various colours. The white variety is said to rival the famous Carrara marble.

Roumania, by the way, is rich in minerals, but it is regrettable that so few are exploited. Copper, lead, salt, coal, petroleum, lignite form some of the mineral wealth of the country. Even gold has been found so far back as in the time of Turkish rule.

At present only petroleum, salt, and lignite are worked. Lignite (a mineral coal retaining the

texture of the wood from which it is formed) is used, together with natural wood, on the railways instead of coal. It is decidedly advantageous for the traveller, as it burns with a perfectly white smoke and does away with all the grit and dust so noticeable in Hungarian trains.

Roumania possesses very few lakes, the most important being Balta Alba, which is near the town of Ramnic cu Serat. It has great mineral properties, and numbers of people flock to it every summer, as its waters are said to cure rheumatism and scrofula as well as other diseases. Mineral springs are abundant. Besides iodine, sulphur, and mud baths there are the State-supported Spas of Govora and Caliman-eshti, situated among some of the finest Carpathian scenery. Tekir Ghiol, near Constantza, of Turkish origin, as its name implies, and Neamtz, are favourite resorts of invalids from all parts, attracted thereto by the far-famed curative properties of their waters. It is unfortunate that accommodation at these springs is still rather primitive, although the prices are exorbitant.

It is to be hoped that with time the entire mineral wealth of Roumania may be exploited, and thus considerably contribute to the prosperity of the country.

Roumania has not many towns of importance. After the capital (with a population of 200,000) one need only mention Jassy, Craiova, Slatina, Galatz, and Braila—the last two named being ports on the Danube, which do a considerable trade in grain. The ports on the Black Sea are Sulina, where an English gunboat belonging to the European Commission was always stationed, and Constantza,

which of late years has direct communication with Constantinople.

Before the building of the bridge over the Danube at Cernavoda—which, by the way, is eleven miles long, as a great tract of marshy land has also to be traversed, travellers from Roumania bound for Constantinople were obliged to cross the river to Rustchuk and then embark from Varna, a Bulgarian port. Now, fortunately, all that is changed, greatly to the advantage of travellers, as Roumanian steamers are much more comfortable than the Bulgarian.

There were formerly only two main lines of railway by which one could leave Roumania, travelling west. One of these is *via* Verciorova, and runs parallel with the Danube for a considerable distance, passing on its way Pressburg, the old capital of Hungary, where are still to be seen on an eminence the ruins of the castle once inhabited by Maria Theresa. The other route, and, by the way, the cheaper, is in my opinion much more interesting.

Starting from Bucarest, we have a couple of hours' run, after which begins the ascent of the valley of the Prahova. Passing Campina, the region of the oilfields, which is not so very agreeable for the olfactory nerves, a halt is made for a few minutes at lovely Sinaia, of which I have much to say hereafter.

The train now toils along more slowly, as the ascent becomes more difficult. Passing Busteni, overshadowed by the towering peak of the Caraiman, we reach Poiana Tzapului, at which station we descend to visit the beautiful cascade in the neighbourhood. Azuga is next reached, where we have the opportunity of drinking a glass of the

excellent Azuga beer. Finally, a run of another half hour brings us to the top of the Pass at Predeal. The station is so arranged that half is in Roumanian territory and half in Hungarian.

At Predeal we are, unhappily, obliged to change trains—unhappily, I say, as Hungarian trains are so dirty and gritty from coal-dust, and the guards of the trains are *always* uncivil. By the way, I wonder why Hungarian guards as a rule wear black kid gloves. It is strange, but so it is.

When passports had been examined and stamped with the Imperial Austro-Hungarian seal, and luggage searched for anything contraband, passengers were allowed by the sentry to pass on to the Hungarian part of the platform, but on no pretext whatever might one return to the Roumanian section. As the sole restaurant in the place is on Roumanian soil, this arrangement was extremely awkward for unwary passengers travelling that way for the first time.

Leaving Predeal, the descent of the Tomos Pass is begun, through lovely scenery which is described further on. The line continues through Hungary, by way of Transylvania, till it finally arrives at Budapest, where travellers change again into trains travelling north, west, or south.

There have been changes since the time of which I write, and now the Simplon express leaves Bucarest and proceeds through Agram in Croatia to Trieste, Vienna, Milan, Lausanne, and Paris.

The Danube

The Danube, that mighty river so often spoken of as "The Blue Danube," proves disappointing in

some parts. First of all, it is never blue, but of a muddy grey colour, and then at times it flows through such flat country that the scenery is most depressing. The numerous floating water-mills that are anchored near the banks do not greatly add to the picturesqueness of the scene. They are employed to grind maize and other grain, and the river supplies the motive power.

On the other hand, the scenery of the Danube near the " Iron Gates " and the Kazan Pass cannot be surpassed. It is among the finest scenery in Europe. I have travelled on the Danube from Vienna to Giurgiu, and *vice versa*, several times, therefore am fairly well acquainted with it.

The " Iron Gates " are simply rocks in the bed of the river, in some places just appearing above the surface of the water and in others just visible below. There is a continual swirling and eddying of the water round these obstructions, and they were formerly very dangerous to shipping.

The first time I travelled down from Vienna, the passengers were obliged at Orsova to leave the large steamer and change into quite a small one, which then carefully threaded its way among the dangerous rocks of the " Iron Gates." Everyone was greatly interested in the wonderful scenery through which we were passing, and the interest was not unmixed with a thrill of fear as we listened to the uncanny tales of former accidents that had occurred just at that spot. The raconteur was a Hungarian, who seemed delighted with the effect he produced. All breathed more freely on leaving the danger-zone and embarking again in one of the larger steamers which awaited us.

The terrors of the "Iron Gates" are, happily, no longer existent, as a great extent of rock was blown up by dynamite some years ago. As the Danube flows through many countries, the consent or approval of each to this proceeding had to be obtained. The great engineering feat was made an occasion of much ceremony, attended by the Emperor of Austria and the Kings of Roumania and Serbia, as well as by members of the Danube Commission. A channel has now been made which stretches for a considerable distance, so that no interruption of the river traffic is to be feared. One hopes that in time the channel may be extended so as to stretch from Vienna to the Black Sea.

Before leaving the scene of the "Iron Gates" I may just shortly describe how they appear under present conditions. As the steamer approaches the Kazan Pass (where what remains of the "Iron Gates" is still to be seen) the river gradually contracts, till it is only about 100 yards in width. One gazes with awe at the steep rocks on each side of the Pass, rocks which rise to the height of 1000 feet or more and which enclose the river in such a manner that they give one the impression of being on a lake rather than a river. As we continue our way through the Pass we notice at some distance the water foaming and eddying round a mass of submerged rock, and at one particular spot the shining line of breakers seems to lie so directly in our path that it appears almost impossible to avoid it. However, the steamer keeps steadily on its way through the channel cut for it, and although at times it appears to be heading for the wall of rock, as if

there were really no outlet from the Pass, still, by many devious turns and twists, we get safely through and out into the wider reaches of the river.

What a wonderful river the Danube is! Taking its rise, it is said, in the courtyard of a gentleman's residence in Germany, it continues its course through many countries, absorbing by the way their numerous tributaries, till it finally empties itself into the Black Sea by three mouths. Not only is it remarkable for its manifold windings, but also for the contraction and expansion of its waters. It is probably at its narrowest in the Kazan Pass, where, as I have already said, it contracts to a width of about 100 yards; whilst in some parts, and noticeably before reaching Belgrade, it has a width of between two and three miles. The Rhine is a beautiful river, but its scenery cannot be compared to that of the Danube; it is by no means so grand or impressive. As for the Elbe, that river has the appearance of a canal when one visits it after viewing the Danube.

From Budapest to Giurgiu is the most interesting part of the river. The scenery is not always grand or even beautiful, but it is interesting, passing as it does through the countries of Hungary, Servia, and Bulgaria, till it finally reaches Roumania. The most uninteresting stretch is that between Budapest and Vienna, where the river flows between perfectly flat banks, nothing to be seen on either side, no villages, no people, only masses of willows stretching for miles, causing a most depressing effect.

The river is ice-bound for nearly three months,

but although I have often wished to skate across to Rustchuk on the Bulgarian side, the difficulties have always proved insuperable, as the frozen ridges caused by the wavelets and eddies of the current present anything but a smooth surface to the skater.

CHAPTER III

The Government of Roumania—The Parliament—Lively elections—The batiusi and their big sticks—Military picnics at election times—" General Post " after an election—Party handwriting—Natural selection circumscribed for postal officials—The army—A soldier's life not always a happy one—Military marketers, nurses, and spring-cleaners—The accession celebrations—On parade—The opposition goes into mourning and enjoys a happy day—Threatening demonstrations which end happily—A gallant army—If stiff on parade, the Roumanian soldier is " one of the best."

THE Government of Roumania is a limited monarchy, the present King, Ferdinand, being the nephew of the late King Carol. The Salic law is in force, and so no woman may ascend the throne. In default of a male heir, a king may be chosen amongst the royal families of Western Europe.

The Parliament consists of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, which latter corresponds to our House of Commons. The pay of a cabinet minister in pre-war times was about 30,000 francs (£1200), and the Deputies are also remunerated for their services to the extent of 20 francs a day while Parliament is sitting. The constituency is divided into four groups or " colleges," as they are called.

The first college consists of citizens having an income of over £150. The second college is composed of those with an income ranging from £50 to

£150. The third includes tradespeople, who pay the State from £4 upwards annually. The fourth college comprises everyone who pays taxes, however small they may be. The Senate is elected by the first two colleges for a period of eight years, the Deputies by all four colleges for a term of four years.

The chief qualification of a Senator is the possession of an income of £400 to £500 a year. He must also be over forty years of age. Deputies must be over twenty-five, must be Roumanians either by birth or naturalisation, and must live in Roumania.

The constitution of Roumania has been compiled with great regard both to justice and the liberties of the people.

The Greek Church is the State Church, but, although the Jews are under many disabilities, there is freedom of worship for all sects. Freedom of speech is permitted, and no restraint is placed on public meetings.

There is also complete liberty of the press (which is, unfortunately, too often abused). Capital punishment has been abolished except under martial law. The property of the peasantry is inviolable. Primary instruction is gratuitous and compulsory. Such are some of the principal provisions of the constitution.

It is always very amusing when a general election takes place. Both Conservatives and Liberals are fully occupied in canvassing beforehand, and meetings are everywhere in full swing. When the election day dawns, then the fun begins. Polling booths are established in different parts of the town,

and they are open as early as 7 a.m. That elector is wise who goes early to record his vote. Inside the polling station there is, besides the recording official, an agent for each side, Conservative and Liberal, who narrowly scrutinises each voter as he appears, and sees to it that he records his vote properly. Trickery is very often practised, so it behoves each one to be on the alert. By some means or other, names of people long dead are inserted in the register, and, as a man remarked in my hearing at one election, "In my father's lifetime he never had a vote, but now he is dead they are giving him one."

As has been said, it is well to record one's vote in good time—that is, if one wishes to avoid the *batiusi*. Electioneering agents in Roumania do not always rely upon the *suaviter in modo*, but freely adopt the *fortiter in re*. They employ gangs of men (known as *batiusi*) who, armed with big sticks, are posted at the entrances to the polling booths, frankly for the purpose of intimidating those who refuse to vote as their party wishes. Under such circumstances it is not to be wondered at if feeling sometimes runs very high and the services of the military have to be called upon. In such a case the troops line up before the polling booths, and every elector who arrives carrying a stick, no matter how small or innocent-looking, is gravely relieved of it before entering. If matters assume a very threatening aspect and it is impossible for the troops to return to barracks for the mid-day meal, large cauldrons of soup are brought down to them. This is served out together with large pieces of bread, and the soldiers seem rather to enjoy the

little break in their monotonous life, if it does not include the breaking of heads.

After the election, when the new Government is duly installed in office, a clearance of the former officials takes place. One and all are changed, even to the man who runs to the nearest café for the cup of afternoon coffee. The incoming ministers and members of Parliament have all a crowd of protégés, who also want their good time as long as Parliament lasts. It is curious then on entering the post office, the custom house, or any other public building, to find there entirely new faces. It reminds one of the game of "General Post."

Every change of Government is a signal for reform. Sometimes it is merely reform in the literal sense of the word, as, for example, when an incoming Government makes an attack upon the caligraphy taught and practised in the schools. If the Liberals have adopted a sloping style of writing, Conservatives upon assuming power are sure to insist upon the re-formation of the characters and the setting of them up in a perpendicular position. It is the party idea *in excelsis*, and irresistibly recalls the difference of opinion of the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians in *Gulliver's Travels* as to which end of the egg should be broken.

Mentioning the post office just now reminds me of one strange rule in force in that department. Post-office employees must only marry members of the opposite sex who are also engaged in the post office. I could scarcely credit this when I heard it, but a prominent official of the post office assured me that it was the case.

The Army

At the time of the accession of Prince Carol the army consisted of raw levies unprovided with uniforms and in many cases armed only with pikes and sabres. Indeed, so unsoldierlike was their appearance that they were referred to as a " ragged band of gipsies." Prince Carol (he was not crowned king until after the battle of Plevna) found not only that the army was wholly untrained, but that in numbers also it was totally inadequate.

The sovereign immediately set to work to bring his forces up to date. Universal compulsory service was at once introduced. German instructors were brought into the country, and it is from this time that the story of the organisation of the Roumanian army begins. The result has shown what can be done, if only the right material is to hand.

The Roumanian soldier is a splendid fighting unit, his superb daring and dash carry him through the most difficult places. In the numerous campaigns of later years in which the Roumanian army has been engaged, the courage and admirable soldierly qualities of the men have been amply shown.

That King Carol was proud of his army, no one could doubt who watched his face during the march past of the troops every 10th of May. He rejoiced in the fact that it was owing to his own exertions that the army was maintained in such a high state of efficiency. The standing army when Roumania entered the Great War had a strength of 600,000 to 700,000 men, but with the reserves included a million trained men could be counted upon.

The infantry were armed with German rifles—Mannlicher, I believe; and the heavy guns used were from Krupp's. Those presented to the army some years ago by King Carol, to which I have elsewhere made reference, were from the same source. However, after the beginning of the war heavy orders for munitions were placed with Japan. An excellent medical service was organised, composed of skilled surgeons and a highly efficient staff.

General Averescu, who was first in command, is a fine strategist and a born leader of men. It is to be regretted that party politics had kept him absent for a time from a sphere of activity just when he should have been well to the front. As a follower of Take Jonescu he was looked on by the Liberals with disfavour, and not given any high command; but immediately war broke out they were constrained to place him in the post for which he was so well fitted. The position of Commander-in-Chief of the army is, as everyone is aware, filled by King Ferdinand.

As in all Continental countries, there is universal military service in Roumania. All males are required to present themselves for military service at any period they may choose between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one. Formerly the duration of service was one year. It was later reduced to six months. Young fellows of the better class are required to supply their own uniforms, and if they elect to enter a cavalry regiment they must provide their own horses.

Exemptions are only granted in cases of physical disablement, and it has sometimes occurred that a

peasant has cut off a couple of fingers so that he may be disqualified. It is no wonder that such things will happen, as the lot of the young peasants in garrison is not always enviable. They are often badly clothed and badly fed, and their duties are manifold. Of course they are liable to be called upon to act as officers' servants, a lieutenant having the right to one soldier's services, and a captain two. But such service is not by any means understood in Roumania as it is in England. In the former country the soldier servant has not only to look after his master, but also to do all the household work. He goes to market and buys the provisions for the day, takes the children to school, and performs the duties of a maid-of-all-work. It is even a common occurrence for a lady living next door to an officer's family (when she is overwhelmed with work, such as spring cleaning) to borrow the soldier for the day !

The Roumanian soldier on parade does not cut a good figure. He has not the free, swinging step of our own soldiers. Both officers and men march very stiffly, and have a somewhat wooden appearance.

During the lifetime of the late King Carol there was always a parade on the 10th May (old style), the date of his accession to the throne. As the troops marched past the royal box, one received an impression that if a soldier in any one of the ranks should make a false step it would cause a catastrophe—the whole row would fall one after another, just like wooden soldiers.

Bucarest, by the way, is very gay on the 10th May, the Roumanian colours—red, blue, and yellow—

are to be seen everywhere. Triumphal arches span the principal street, and pavilions are erected for the royal family, the members of the diplomatic corps, and the principal officials of state.

In King Carol's time a Te Deum was always sung in the Metropole (cathedral) at the beginning of the day. King Carol and Prince Ferdinand then used to ride with their respective suites from the church to the boulevard where the march past took place. One day the Prince's horse behaved very badly, and threw its rider as he was leading his regiment past the royal box. The accident caused a great sensation, but fortunately the Prince was not much injured.

After the parade the day was given up to amusements, and in the evening the town was brilliantly illuminated. The illuminations were really very fine, and did credit to the people who carried them out. It did not always happen that everyone was contented and amiable on these occasions, as very often that day was chosen by the opposition to make demonstrations. Newspapers with a deep black border round them were sold openly in the streets. This was meant as an indication of sorrow at having a German king to rule over Roumania. If the opposition could succeed in exciting the populace to carry out a demonstration against the King and the Government of the day they were happy, and could retire to bed in a much pleasanter frame of mind.

The operations of the opposition are generally a source of amusement. If anything happens in Parliament to raise their ire, they immediately hold meetings to protest. After the meetings a pro-

cession is formed, the object being to proceed to the palace and lay their grievances before the King. As, however, Roumanians never can keep silent, their plans are always known beforehand, so when they arrive within a certain distance of the palace they find all the approaches barred by the police. A parley takes place, great excitement prevails for five minutes, and then all quietly disperse.

If it is thought that the police will not be able to cope with the disturbance, the soldiers are called out. They line up along the principal streets with guns ready (one wonders if they are loaded). Officers on horseback dash up and down giving orders, and there is great excitement. Vague rumours are afloat, and one wonders what is going to happen. It all looks very serious, but as time goes on it becomes known that the demonstrators have gone another way, and somehow one feels that the soldiers have been badly treated. After standing on guard in the street for hours it must be disappointing that nothing happens and they must quietly return to barracks.

Notwithstanding his stiffness the Roumanian soldier is a gallant fighter—one of the best, and indeed the army was brought to a state of great proficiency by the late King. He himself was a born soldier, and led his men gallantly against their old oppressors the Turks when the battle of Plevna was won.

The Roumanian national anthem is a fine martial air and was composed by Eduard Hübsch. He, although of German birth, was a naturalised Roumanian long resident in the country, and died some years ago at Sinaia.

CHAPTER IV

The religion of Roumania—The head of the Church must be a monk, and therefore a celibate—The priests are of the peasant class, unlearned and little respected—A priest's monthly rounds—Prayers for a girl's marriage—St Demetre the patron saint of Bucarest—His vocation as a rain-maker—He is brought out when the priests see the rain coming—Roumanian churches—The legend of Curtea d'Argesh—The well of Manole's wife's tears—Easter customs—The Roumanian monasteries: dens for lazy people—A wonderful grotto—The convents—Princess Marie as a nun.

ROUMANIANS, as everybody knows, belong to the Greek Church. There are no divisions in the orthodox religion as there are, unhappily, in our own, and complete freedom of worship is allowed to all foreigners in the country. The forms and ceremonies of the Greek Church resemble very closely those of the Roman Catholic. Ikons (or holy pictures) hang in all the churches as well as in private houses, and are kissed by the faithful whenever a prayer is said. The sign of the cross is also universal; it is always made when one passes a church.

It is rather amusing to watch the Olteni (the equivalent of the London coster) with the vegetables crossing himself most devoutly in passing a church, well knowing that he will cheat you immediately afterwards if you give him the chance. However, he does not look upon his little dodges as sins, he simply prides himself upon his cleverness in getting the better of you.

The head of the Greek Church is always chosen from amongst the monks. The monks are vowed to a life of celibacy, and live enclosed in the numerous monasteries scattered throughout the country. The priests, on the contrary, are allowed to marry; that is, they may have one wife, but if she dies they are not allowed to re-marry. The priests are usually of the peasant class; no member of even a middle-class family would dream of entering the Church. They have little education, and are not looked on with any respect. The garb is rather peculiar. Over his ordinary clothes a priest wears a long coat, with wide hanging sleeves, reaching almost to his feet, and on his head a sort of brimless hat made of red, purple or black velvet, according to the wearer's status in the Church.

As a priest is not allowed to cut his hair after taking orders, he is obliged to wear it plaited like a Chinaman's pigtail. He seems to be rather ashamed of this distinction, however, as the queue is always stuffed under the collar of the coat.

On the first day of the month every priest goes round his own parish with an acolyte carrying incense. Every house is entered in order to bless it for the coming month, prayers are said and incense waved in every room. Only the room of the English or French governess is left out, as she is a heretic.

Should a young girl find it difficult to meet with a suitable husband, the priest, at the special request of her parents, proceeds to her room and remains there for some time reciting prayers specially arranged for such an occasion, the end in view being marriage for the girl.

The patron saint of Bucarest is St Demetre—his mummy, enclosed in a silver casket, lies in the church named after him. On his "name-day" special services are held. The silver casket containing the holy remains is placed outside the church, and as all Bucarest is present on that day, everyone who passes by, and feels so disposed, may kiss the hand of what was once St Demetre. The saint is supposed to have great influence over the weather. If a drought continues too long, then Demetre is appealed to. He is carried round the town in great state, surrounded by numbers of attendant priests, banners flying and music playing.

It has sometimes happened that the rain has come down like a deluge before St Demetre could be brought under shelter again. Then great is the jubilation, and the gratitude to him for what he has done is unbounded. But from private observations that I have made, my opinion is that the wary priests wait till they see a little cloud like a man's hand in the sky before they risk disturbing St Demetre.

The Roumanian churches are circular in form, with no seats for the worshippers, save a very few near the altar for some favoured individuals, or for royalty should they favour the church with a visit. Behind the reredos is a room for the priests, from which they sally forth at stated intervals to take their part in the service. No instrumental music is allowed in the church, the vocal music being provided by men and young boys; and very fine it is, as Roumanians are a musical race with a well-developed taste for what is best.

The beautiful church of Curtea d'Argesh, a couple of hours' journey from Bucarest, is built in the

Byzantine style. The exterior appears to be of marble, but in reality it is a kind of limestone, easy to work, which becomes quite hard on exposure to the air. The church is square in shape, and a dome rises from the centre. At each corner of the building is a little tower, and the most curious feature of the structure is that these four towers have such a twisted appearance that they seem about to fall on one another. The truth is that each tower is encircled by spiral bands from top to bottom in such a fashion as to make them appear to be out of the perpendicular, although in reality it is not so.

In the interior of the church the walls are adorned with fresco paintings and carvings. Here is also to be seen a copy of the Gospels done in the style of the illuminated missals of olden times, the work of the late Queen of Roumania. Here and there in this interesting work small sketches have been introduced by way of illustration. Princess Marie, the little daughter of the late Queen, figures there as an angel. This is entirely in consonance with one's sense of the fitness of things, but when St John is seen represented by the face of Monsieur J. K., it does give one rather a shock.

The windows in the body of the church are very narrow, but are arranged in such a fashion that every corner of the building is well lighted. The ornamentation on the outside is both interesting and beautiful. A large moulding encircles the church, and above this are round shields beautifully decorated with flowers and leaves. Little gilt birds are suspended at intervals, from whose beaks hang tiny bells. When the wind blows from a certain quarter, agitating these little bells, the effect is very pretty.

Just opposite the door of the church there is a most beautiful little building resembling a shrine. It is composed of four pillars which support a series of mouldings, and is crowned with a dome just like the church itself. The *tout ensemble* is so beautiful that it impresses the visitor with the idea of its being a fairy structure.

At a short distance from the church is a monastery at which Carmen Sylva used to stay for weeks at a time. She was very fond of the old legends of Roumania, and especially of that connected with Curtea d'Argesh.

The architect and builder of the church was one Manole, and according to the legend he was extremely anxious to get the building completed by a certain date. He spurred on his men to their utmost endeavours; but alas! no matter what progress they made during the day, the work which they accomplished was always destroyed in the night following. This continued to happen, and the only conclusion to be arrived at was that evil spirits were at work who were opposed to the building of churches. Manole tried all sorts of plans to circumvent them, but in vain. Finally he made a vow that, in order to appease their wrath, he would build into the church wall the first person to come this way on a certain day, if the evil spirits would, on their part, refrain from interfering with his work. The day arrived, and Manole eagerly looked for a victim. For hours no one passed that way, and the day dragged slowly along. At length a figure appeared in the distance, and Manole eagerly awaited its approach. What was his horror, when the figure drew nearer, to discover that it was his young wife

coming to see how the work was progressing. She was the idol of his life, but the vow must be kept. There was no alternative. With a heavy heart he asked his wife to stand in a niche in the wall. She, poor thing, taking it as a joke, willingly consented. The workmen began to build her in, she talking and laughing meanwhile with her husband. However, as the bricks and mortar slowly but surely began to enclose her she became frightened. She begged Manole to stop jesting and take her out. Despairingly he turned his eyes away and spurred the men on to fresh endeavours.

Now the wall reaches her knees, her chest, her eyes. She becomes desperate, and screams and implores her husband to free her. His only answer is to urge the men to greater haste. Her cries become fainter and fainter, till, some minutes after the completion of the wall, her voice ceases for ever.

From this day forward the work on the church went on splendidly, no interference whatever taking place during the night. Evidently the evil spirits were propitiated. The legend continues that Manole kept up till the church was quite finished, then threw himself from the roof and was killed.

Three minutes' walk from the church there is a well of beautifully cold clear water of which every visitor must have a draught. This well is supposed to have originated from the tears of Manole's wife as she was being built into the wall of the church.

Roumanians are not very diligent churchgoers, but twice a year at least they do turn out—that is at Easter and at Christmas. In the Greek Church Easter is *the* great festival. The churches are crowded, people kneeling on the steps and along the

pavement when it is impossible to get standing room inside. Service begins at 10.30 on Easter Eve, and on the stroke of midnight all the gaily decorated candles with which the people have provided themselves are lighted, and a procession is formed, headed by the priests, the chief priest walking under a canopy borne by four others. The procession wends its way three times round the church, then the blessing is pronounced and the congregation disperses. Whoever succeeds in reaching home with his or her candle still alight will be happy through the coming year, but woe to the unhappy one if an unlucky blast should extinguish it. All sorts of misfortunes may then be looked for.

It is a very pretty sight, as the different groups are seen returning home, carefully shading the twinkling little lights, which appear to dance hither and thither. The churches are profusely decorated with flowers at such times.

There are many curious ceremonies performed at Easter, of which the following is an example. A table is placed at the upper end of the nave and upon it an image or picture of our Saviour. As each person reaches the table he drops down and proceeds on hands and knees under it. This is done three times, and is supposed to be typical of the great humility of the worshipper. This part of the service delights the children, who sprawl under the table with great goodwill but not apparently with any appreciation of the significance of the ceremony. Reverence on the part of the congregation is not one of the features of the Greek Church services. A good deal of talking and laughing goes on, so much so that it is no unusual thing for a priest to stop in

the middle of the service and request the people to be silent. Even at weddings the same thing may be seen. The bride and groom appear to be holding a reception rather than having a service celebrated which is to unite them for life—or rather till such time as they think fit to dissolve the union.

The monasteries are a great feature of social life in Roumania. At a time when there were no hotels, hospitality was always shown to travellers by the monks. One could remain there for a week or two without being under an obligation to pay anything. At each monastery there are from twenty to thirty monks. Each one has a tiny apartment that he can call his own, to which is attached a small plot of ground. In this plot the monk grows his vegetables, or keeps a couple of fowls. He is allowed about forty bani a day (4d.) from Government, and to eke out his living he has recourse to all sorts of devices. The favourite one is the making of certain liqueurs which are offered for sale to any traveller who may happen to pass. It is a great pity that these monasteries should be allowed by Government, as they are simply dens for lazy people. One may imagine that with twenty monks attached to one church the services required from each are not very arduous, especially when the church is in a remote district. They are expected to officiate at stated intervals day and night, and recite prayers. That done, the time is their own to use as they think fit.

In olden times, and more especially during the rule of the Turk, the monasteries were often used as places of refuge by the oppressed, or as storehouses for their valuables. They are generally built on very high eminences, and command a good view of

the surrounding country. One monastery in particular which I have visited is situated at such a height in the Carpathians that in winter communication with the outside world is absolutely impossible; the monks are completely snowed up.

But in summer what a difference! The monastery is surrounded by lovely meadows, where one walks knee-deep in grasses and most beautiful wildflowers. Through these meadows a babbling brook winds its way under overhanging willow branches to the river further down.

Close to the chapel of the monastery there is a natural grotto which is always shown to visitors.

I remember exploring it once with a party of friends, and the uncanny sensation it gave me. Each member of the party was provided with a candle, and a monk acted as guide. As we passed further and further into the grotto, we appeared to be accompanied by a rushing river, but no river was to be seen. The effect was weird. The thick darkness, seeming to be rendered only more opaque by the feeble light of the candles, surrounded us like a pall, and we scarcely ventured to speak above a whisper. The monks assert that there is an underground river, but whence it starts and whither it goes no one seems to know. The cave itself is vast, and extends for miles under the mountains. It is thought that it communicates with the natural grotto at Campulung, which is very similar, and may really be a part of it; but this has never been proved. No one seems to have had either the time or the inclination to undertake such an expedition. A Royal Geographical Society for research has not yet been formed in Roumania.

There are numerous convents for women scattered all over the country. The costume of the nuns is not at all pretty. Over the dress, which is of ordinary stuff, a long cloak is worn, and a band of black cloth is bound round the forehead, the ends falling in pleats at the back, completely covering the hair. To crown all and complete the picture, a round flat cap or hat, also black, is perched on the top of the head.

The system of Roumanian convents differs somewhat from that of the Roman Catholic convents. Roumanian nuns are quite free to go about and visit friends and relatives. They are only vowed to celibacy, and they live together in communities, working for the poor and visiting the sick. No branch of education is, however, undertaken by them, as they themselves are not sufficiently instructed for that. Before the present Queen of Roumania ascended the throne one of her greatest pleasures was to stay for a few weeks at the convent near Campulung. There she donned the garb of a nun—such a pretty nun had never been seen before in Roumania,—occupied herself with embroidery or painting, and ate the ordinary fare of the inmates. I believe a favourite sweet of hers on these occasions was musca, made of flour, butter, and sugar, which when cooked is completely covered with burnt sugar. It tastes very good indeed. This convent is situated in a very beautiful part of the country, and the chapel belonging to it is a curiosity in its way, having been excavated out of the solid rock.

CHAPTER V

Roumania's capital—A garden city—Modesty on the trams—"A town of one street, one church, and one idea"—The Calea Victorie—Two hundred churches—The church of Doamna Balash—English customs gaining headway—The houses of Bucarest—Afternoon calls and refreshments—The fortifications.

BUCAREST is situated on a marshy plain, a fact accounting for the malaria which so often attacks foreigners, as well as the inhabitants. It is an irregularly built town on the river Dimbovitza. When I first went there the town was very badly paved with rough cobble-stones, and it was highly disagreeable to go through the Calea Victorie, as the constant rumbling of the traffic over these stones effectually prevented any attempt at conversation. That is all changed now since wood-paving has been introduced.

The town is well lighted, in some streets incandescent lamps being used, whilst electricity is employed on the Boulevard and the Chaussée.

The Boulevard, planted on both sides with trees, divides the town into two parts. It is a fine wide thoroughfare, and runs from the neighbourhood of the Palace at Cotroceni, right up to the Calea Mosilor, which it meets at right angles.

The best view of the town is from the hill on which the Metropolitan Church stands. Seen from

there it is very picturesque—the houses of the better class standing in gardens, in some cases of a fairly good size.

Numerous small public gardens, the largest called Cismegiu, and the drive known as the Chaussée, greatly contribute to the garden-like appearance of the town.

There is a very effective tram service in Bucarest, which was started some years ago by an English company. At first two-deckers were used, somewhat after the fashion of our own English trams; but that did not suit the authorities of the town. The idea of women climbing up to such elevated seats shocked them to such an extent that an order was issued forbidding the feminine use of the overhead seats. These trams were then withdrawn, and others of a more modest appearance and characteristics substituted. An electric tram now runs on the Boulevard. What a commotion there was when it was first instituted! People were afraid to trust themselves on it—they feared electrocution most probably; but by degrees that feeling of fear was dissipated, and now the electric tram is as much used as the other. And now, I have just learnt, motor omnibuses have been adopted. I am glad to have been spared that innovation.

Bucarest has been described as a town of one street, one church, and one idea. The aphorism is to some extent justified, for the Calea Victorie is practically Bucarest, the Greek Church knows no dissenters, and the prevailing idea is the spending of money.

Calea Victorie is a very long street. It leads from the Dimbovitza to the Chaussée (the fashionable

afternoon resort of the Bucarestois), and it is essentially *the* street. All the principal buildings, as well as the Royal Palace, are situated in the Calea Victorie, and it is the daily lounge of the *élite* of the town.

It is a cosmopolitan crowd that one encounters on the Calea Victorie: society ladies in elegant costumes, dapper little Frenchmen belonging to the Embassy, Roumanian officers in varied uniforms, handsome Turks with the fez set jauntily on their heads, Armenians with full short skirts and very curious headgear, and many others.

Churches are a great feature of the town—there are, I should think, over two hundred in Bucarest. The Metropole is, of course, the Cathedral, where all ceremonial services are held. St Spiridon is a fine large building, but its beauty has been diminished of late years owing to the fact that the beautiful crosses and chains with which it was formerly ornamented were found too heavy for the roof and had to be removed. In this church many of the fashionable weddings take place.

Of the more modern churches Doamna Balash, founded by the Brancovan family, is decidedly the most beautiful. It stands in a well-laid-out garden, in which are beds of most lovely flowers that form at the same time a fitting setting for the statue of the foundress, Doamna Balash. The statue is very fine, the pose of the figure extremely graceful, whilst the drapery is also a work of art.

The interior of the church is gorgeous indeed, quite Eastern in its rich ornamentation. The exquisite reredos, the beautiful stained-glass windows, the ornamented candelabrum that hangs in the

centre, the rich colours of the carpets that cover the floor, combine to make a picture that cannot be surpassed. During a service the effect is enhanced by the splendid robes and head-dresses of the officiating priests.

Attached to the church is a school, and also almshouses for the aged.

The Brancovan Hospital, which is at the back of the church and is considered amongst the best in the town, is one of a group of four buildings which were erected by the family Brancovan, descendants of a reigning prince of former times.

Life in Bucarest is very agreeable, especially for foreigners, and more particularly for the English, who are looked up to and admired by the Roumanians. Many of our customs have been adopted in recent years, and English, which had long been making headway, has gained so enormously since the war that it will probably soon take the place of French as the polite language of the country. It is curious that with the better-class Roumanians it has become more fashionable than their own language. If one enters a drawing-room, a shop, or even a very intimate family circle, English or French will be heard, very seldom Roumanian—which language is usually left to the servants.

Roumanian houses are generally built with the side to the street, and consist of only one story, on account of the frequent earthquakes.

On entering the house, one finds oneself in a large vestibule sometimes lighted from above by artificial means. This is *really* a vestibule, but is very often used as a sitting-room by the family. All the other rooms open out of this circular chamber. This is a

convenient arrangement for heating purposes, as there is always a large stove in the vestibule, and when the doors of the adjacent rooms are left open an agreeable warmth pervades the house.

There is, besides, a porcelain stove in each room for use in severe weather, as Roumanians are very fond of well-warmed rooms. In the vestibule coal or coke is used, but wood in all the other rooms.

Double windows are always used in winter; but as spring comes on the outer one is exchanged for one of wire-netting, which allows the free passage of air, but keeps out the flies, which are generally troublesome.

Roumania is a breakfastless country. Some people drink a cup of black coffee or take a "dulceata," others have nothing at all till lunch-time. Lunch and dinner are very substantial meals consisting of several courses—the French cuisine being adopted in all the better-class families.

When one pays an afternoon visit for the first time, one is rather astonished at the form the refreshment takes. When salutations have been exchanged and conversation is in full swing, or otherwise, the door opens and a maid appears with a large tray. On it are arranged small glass plates with a spoonful of jam on each, and a glass of water for each person. The visitor, if a foreigner, is generally puzzled as to what is expected of her, but upon observing her neighbours she sees that the spoonful of jam, "dulceata" (pronounced dul-chatza) as it is called, is solemnly swallowed, then washed down by a draught of cold water. One must be careful not to do as a friend of mine did on a first visit. Never having seen such refreshment, she

calmly mixed the spoonful of jam in the water and valiantly swallowed the dose, to the consternation of the Roumanians present.

Most people have heard in recent sad days of the wonderful fortifications of Bucarest, which were designed by a Belgian and constructed at a cost of £4,000,000. The city was thus well protected by outworks, which made it the largest fortified camp in the world, with the exception of Paris.

CHAPTER VI

The land system—The Dominele or squirearchy—The simple life of the peasants—The beginning of a revolt—A premature outbreak—The countryside in flames—King Carol's new guns first used on his subjects—A village population exterminated—Terror in the town—I go to church and am relieved to see Princess Marie there—The tale of a sufferer—The priests and schoolmasters the instigators—The peasants' subterranean dwellings.

IN former times the peasants received a plot of ground proportionate to the number of cattle they owned, and also rights of grazing and collecting fuel in the forests.

In 1864 a law was passed conferring on each peasant freehold property according to the number of oxen he possessed, the man with no cattle receiving the minimum number of acres.

The price of the land was paid to the landlord by the State and recovered from the peasant in a certain number of instalments. On the whole it was not a great boon, as the limited size of the farms, the necessity for buying wood and paying for pasturage, prevented the peasants from obtaining complete independence of the large proprietors on whose estates they still had to work for payment in money or in kind.

Of course a good deal of grumbling went on. The peasant accused his Dominele of allotting to him the worst pasture and other land on the estate. He

complained bitterly when, in the height of harvest, he was obliged to leave his own crops in order to get in those of the squire.

The peasant paid no taxes, but instead he gave his services to the State in road-making, drainage, etc., whenever he was called upon. The improvidence of the peasants very often got them into the hands of the Jews, who fortunately are by law unable to become proprietors of the land.

In later years laws have been passed to improve the position of the peasants, and the Agrarian Reform Law has this year been considered by a Committee of the Chamber.

Under the Expropriation Law a large area had already been designated for distribution to the peasants, whose ultimate well-being one may confidently hope is now assured. There is still a pressing need for good schools in the villages.

The usual wages of a peasant was in pre-war days one franc daily, out of which he had to provide his food.

"Mamaliga," a kind of bread made of maize, with a few fresh onions, or a melon, constitutes the peasant's frugal repast. Meat he rarely sees, and as for drink, not only the peasantry, but indeed all classes of Roumanians are remarkably abstemious. The only drink that the peasant allows himself is a glass of *tzuica* (a spirit distilled from plums) after church on Sundays. In this mild dissipation the village priest generally takes part, and he also acts as mediator should a slight difference of opinion arise, which, it must be said, very seldom occurs.

Although the peasant is by nature of an amiable, indolent character, still on occasion he may be

aroused to a state of fury, either by brooding over his real or fancied wrongs, or through the influence of agitators. In such a state nothing is sacred to him, and a revolt of the peasants once experienced is not easily forgotten.

Such a revolt occurred in 1907, when even we in Bucarest experienced a very uneasy time. The peasants on a certain estate were in a very restless, discontented state of mind, and this disaffection rapidly spreading to neighbouring estates, almost the whole of the rural population became involved in a very serious rising. A plot was arranged to attack the estates of the landed proprietors during the month of July, when, as is usually the case, they would be installed with their families in their country residences for the summer months. Luckily for them some premature development occurred and the trouble began in May, so that only their property suffered, their families being safe in Bucarest.

Every day dreadful stories were in circulation as to the doings of the peasantry. We were told the most harrowing tales of how houses were being wrecked, costly furniture burned, and even stock destroyed. Travellers from the interior of the country related how they saw flames rising to a great height in all directions, as one splendid country-house after another was burnt to the ground. Woe betide any unpopular land agent who was found near the scene! In very many cases he was thrown into the flames. Troops were despatched into the interior to restore order; but as most of the soldiers are themselves of the peasant class, the authorities had to be very careful as to where they

sent them, as in the event of finding themselves among friends or neighbours, the probability was that they would take sides with the insurgents. This actually did happen in one district, where the soldiers deserted their officer, leaving him to be shot down.

A strange example of the irony of fate was shown in the fact that some guns of a new type which King Carol had shortly before presented to the army were now used for the first time in shooting down his subjects.

The most terrible incident of the revolt was described to me by an officer who was present. A certain village had long been known as a hotbed of disaffection, and it was decided that an example should be made of it. Roumanian villages consist as a rule of one long street of simple little white-washed cottages with outhouses in the rear, and this particular village was of the usual character. The artillery approached the village from opposite quarters, and with the new guns raked the street from end to end, practically annihilating the whole population—men, women, and children.

The constant fear of the authorities was that the mob in the capital might join with the peasants. A regiment of infantry, fully equipped with all the impedimenta of war, including some cannon and a few ambulance wagons, was therefore paraded through the streets at regular intervals in order to strike awe into the hearts of the people. The cabarets were closed at an early hour, and suspected quarters were patrolled all night. These measures proved effectual, and no disturbances whatever took place in Bucarest.

The townspeople, however, were very nervous, and always ready to believe the countless reports that were to be heard on every hand. I was staying with some friends at the time, and my host returned home late one evening, having made a round of most of the shops in search of ammunition. His quest, he told us, was fruitless; not a single cartridge was to be had; everything was sold out. Of course this increased the anxiety that we already felt. How often during that troubled time did I stand at the window before retiring for the night, straining my ears to catch any unaccustomed sound, and fancying that I heard the noise of cannon from the direction of the barriers!

One Sunday morning, as I was preparing for church, my hostess entered my room with a very grave face. She had received information from a very reliable source that a determined attack was to be made that day on the town. The churches were to be attacked first, she said, therefore she strongly advised me to stay away. The lady herself had decided to go, with her family, to a relative who lived in what she thought was a safer quarter of the town, and would there remain to watch the course of events.

I decided that if any disturbance was really going to take place it would be preferable for me to be in the midst of my own countrymen, and therefore putting the few valuables I possessed into a small bag, I set out for church. Nothing unusual in the demeanour of the passers-by struck me; no air of repressed excitement was to be remarked, and as I approached the building where the English service was held, any latent feeling of anxiety was com-

pletely dispelled by the sight of Princess Marie, fresh and charming as usual, being swiftly driven to church. I was completely convinced that nothing was to be feared, otherwise the Princess would not have been allowed to appear in the streets.

Once in church all fears were at an end, till aroused again by the entrance of two shady-looking persons of quite forbidding appearance. I then for the first time became really frightened. Who were they? What could they want? Would they throw bombs? As a matter of fact they did nothing; but it was not until the conclusion of the service that I learnt they were detectives, and their business was to watch over the safety of Princess Marie.

The day passed very quietly, and I must say that I felt quite superior and remarkably brave when in the course of the evening I was rung up by my hostess, who wished to know if all was quiet and if she could return in safety with her family. I telephoned at once that all was quiet, not even a dog or cat to be seen in the street, much less any trace of rioters.

Although we in town were spared any terrible sights, we heard dreadful stories from those who had suffered. A lady whom I knew happened to be in the country with her family when the revolt broke out. They managed to escape from their beautiful home, and for three days and nights were hidden by a friendly peasant in an outhouse. Here they were obliged to subsist on the simplest fare, fearing to show themselves; dreading every moment to be discovered. All around could be heard the hoarse cries of the peasants, rising to frenzy as their excitement grew. The glare of their

own burning home penetrated into their hiding-place, and they could picture to themselves the maddened peasants dancing like so many demons round the fire. At last, as the rioters drew off to scenes further afield, it was considered safe to attempt the journey to the station. What a walk that must have been, and what a relief when finally their goal was reached, and a train was found on the point of starting for Bucarest! It is true that the journey was made with a man standing with a loaded revolver at each carriage door, but all fear was dismissed from their minds when they found themselves safe and sound in the capital.

The instigators of the revolt, as was eventually proved, were the schoolmasters and the priests. The proofs of this were overwhelming. No one knows, and probably no one will ever know, the number of peasants who lost their lives during the disturbances, but that it was very large there is no doubt whatever.

Several timid folk left the country with their children and went to Kronstadt, just a few miles over the border in Hungarian territory, and there they remained till all was quiet once more.

It was rather amusing for the Roumanian families who later on ventured to return to their estates, to see some of the peasants parading about in garments that had formerly belonged to them.

A remarkable feature of country life in Roumania, which reminds us sharply that serfdom has not long been extinct, is the curious kind of subterranean housing provided for the labourers on many estates. In the neighbourhood of the farm you will notice a long ridge or mound of earth some three feet in height,

at one end of which is an inverted V-shaped opening like a ship's scuttle. If you enter this " scuttle " and descend a few steps you will find yourself in a large underground apartment furnished with a stove, a small table in the centre, a number of beds —of a sort—placed round the walls, and nothing else. My host, on the occasion of my visiting one of these quaint dwellings on his estate, assured me that his people preferred these " dugouts " to any other form of dwelling, as they were cool in summer and warm in winter. My visit was paid in the summer, but I imagine that when the stove is alight the place must be a bit stuffy, to say the least of it.

CHAPTER VII

Village scenes—National dances—The picturesque peasant costumes—Peasant girls who powder and paint—An idyllic scene—A country wedding—Peasant simplicity.

WHEN staying in the country, I always took great delight in witnessing the village scenes. Roumanians, as I have already mentioned, are a musical race. They also love dancing. Some of their country-dances are very pretty. The principal one is the " Hora," and it is danced by any number of people to the music of a violin. A number of young men and girls take hands and form a large ring. They then begin a slow and stately step, the music gradually increasing in speed, and their movements also, till they become fast and furious. Music and dance then suddenly stop. Another dance is the " Sârba," which is danced by two people, either men or women. They stand side by side, each with one hand resting lightly on the other's shoulder. Then the dance begins, and when well done it really affords a most interesting spectacle, so varied and intricate are the steps employed. There is far more individual dancing in these national dances than in ours.

On Sunday afternoons dancing on the village green is the great amusement, and when one comes on the company unexpectedly, and they are not too shy to continue, it is an interesting sight. The

girls, dressed in their varied and picturesque costumes, the crimson, blue, and gold of which flash here and there with the movements of the wearers, the young men clad in snowy-white garments, make a pretty picture, backed as it is by the surrounding foliage, and bathed in brilliant sunshine.

I must describe the dress of the young peasant, as it is rather curious. A very tight pair of breeches is worn, of a white thick sort of flannel, sometimes embroidered, and sometimes simply bound with black. The snowy shirt is adorned with a row of thick lace, and is not tucked into the breeches, but hangs straight down. It is, however, caught in at the waist by a very broad leather belt (in which he keeps what money he may have). Sandals on the feet tied on with leather thongs, and a high cap of sheep-skin with the woolly side out, complete the costume of the young gallant. If he wants to be very smart on Sunday he wears a flower behind his ear to have in readiness for his sweetheart. If the weather is chilly he wears a loose short jacket over the shirt, but in winter he has a long sheep-skin coat which covers him completely.

One would imagine that the peasants in those remote districts would be very unsophisticated and quite ignorant of the various little ways and means by which the women in city life seek to enhance their charms. This, however, is not the case. It is quite a common thing to see the peasant girls " done up " with powder and paint to as great an extent as their town sisters. The complexion of the Roumanians is rather dark, but as they prefer the white and red of fairer races they do their best in imitation.

It is very interesting to walk through a village on a summer evening. Most of the people are sitting at their doors enjoying the cool air. A song is heard in the distance, then another group takes it up, till the music swells into quite a volume of sound as the singers draw nearer. Sometimes a wood-fire is burning outside the house, and round it friends and neighbours gather, either singing or relating stories till far into the night. As we look round on the dark eager faces lit up by the firelight, then at the towering mountains which surround us, and the great golden moon hanging midway in the dark sky, we realise that we live in a beautiful world.

The little country churches are very quaint. They are generally built in a circular form, with no seats, just a mat on the stone floor on which the priest stands. There is always a sort of vestibule, and in this is the " bell," or rather gong. It is a large metal tray, and worshippers are called to church by repeated strokes made on it with two stout sticks. A boy wields these sticks, and though at the beginning the strokes are slow and measured, as the hour of service draws nearer they become quicker and quicker till there is a regular hail of them. Then they suddenly cease. The effect is curious and even comical. The country priest is not at all so severe or so reserved as his town brother. On the contrary, if anyone of a better class visits a country church the priest will be quite willing to enter into conversation in the intervals of the service, and he will by no means forget to refer to the needs of the church, the poverty of the parish, and to explain what a godsend it would be to them to get a new altar-cloth.

Sometimes a family from Bucarest will have a

fancy to celebrate a wedding in the country. It is a very jolly event indeed. Everyone wears Roumanian costume, the procession goes on foot to the little church, and after the ceremony there is feasting and dancing till all hours.

But it is the real peasant wedding that is most interesting. People are invited from far and near. The visitors arrive at the church in *karutza* (ox-waggons) all decorated with flowers. That of the bride has a regular canopy over it, under which she sits embowered in flowers of all colours.

She is accompanied to the church by her mother or some other near relative, and given into the keeping of the young man, who awaits her at the altar. The service is then proceeded with, and is followed by the "holy dance" and the exchange of rings. But I shall never forget the shock I experienced at the first country wedding at which I was present, when I saw the bride meekly lift the husband's hand at the end of the service and kiss it. One may see by that that suffragettes have not yet propagated their theories in Roumania.

The visitors at a country wedding do not go empty-handed. Even on the day before the ceremony presents begin to arrive—very often presents in kind, loaves and cakes of all sorts; eggs, butter, fruit, meat, and wine. All this is very necessary indeed, when there are so many to be fed, as the feasting is often kept up for two or three days. One of our maids who had been invited to a wedding told me afterwards, "Oh, miss, it was grand; not like the town weddings, when you get only a glass of wine and a bit of cake. No, indeed; we feasted and danced and amused ourselves for three days!"

Generally speaking, the peasants are very ignorant, and unfortunately the townspeople are only too ready to take advantage of their ignorance when the country folk adventure among them. Seldom having money to handle, the peasants have only a slender knowledge of the currency of their own country, and at one time they used to be defrauded by the tradespeople in consequence. The currency consists of *lei* and *bani*; equivalent to francs and centimes. There are no Roumanian gold coins, those current in the country being French. The one-, two-, and five-franc coins are of silver, as is also the fifty-bani piece. The five-bani piece, made of nickel, is exactly the same in size and appearance as the silver fifty-bani piece, and the peasants, unable to recognise the difference in the metals, were often fleeced. Some time ago, however, the attention of the Government was directed to the matter, and all five-bani pieces issued since are distinguished by a hole pierced through them.

CHAPTER VIII

Trade and commerce—The only strictly Roumanian shops belong to Princes—No English shops, though they would be welcomed —English catalogues unintelligible—An English firm and its "standard" colour—A successful English factory—The labour question, saints' days and names-days—German factories—Beer taxed in the interests of wine—Sugar and cheese factories —Sheep-milking—Petroleum wells in Roumania—An influx of Americans—Rockefeller's agent, Mr Chamberlain and his family —How a man of gipsy origin "struck oil" and became a millionaire—Paper-mills and coal-mines.

I REMARK elsewhere that the retail trade is principally in the hands of the Jews, although of late years a few shops have been opened on the Calea Victorie by some of the "upper ten." There is, for example, the shop of Prince Stirbey, another belonging to Prince Brancovan, and still another to M. Bratiano. These gentlemen conceived the good idea of cultivating various kinds of produce on their farms, thus giving employment to a considerable number of people, and then sending it to town to be sold. Stirbey's butter is well known as the best to be had. His preserved fruit and vegetables are excellent, and his wine bears comparison with the produce of the best vineyards. All the appliances necessary for the conduct of this really important enterprise, the casks and bottles for the wines, the jars for the fruits, etc., are manufactured on the estate, so that employ-

ment is given to many workers in various fields of industry.

It seems curious that the only Roumanian shops in Bucarest should be those belonging to Princes; but so it is. It is also true, however, that these personages merely lend their names to the undertakings, and leave them to be carried out by those whom they employ. Perhaps, as an example has been set by these aristocratic traders, others lower down in the scale of society may in time be tempted to follow suit and discover that it is not really so very derogatory to their dignity to keep a shop.

It is a great pity that there is no English shop in Bucarest. It is also a pity that greater facilities are not offered to Roumanians to trade with England. As a gentleman once remarked to me, "If only an English shop were opened here the goods would command a ready sale, and would oust the German-made articles from the market." But there is no shop, and before the war there were few commercial travellers from England to offer English goods to a sympathetic market.[1] Roumanians like English goods, and would be eager to buy them if it were an easy matter for them to do so. Amongst the many obstacles in the way are our curious monetary system, and our still more curious, and even archaic, system of weights and measures, the latter with terms which are often only intelligible to the trade expert.

The catalogues sent out from England by business firms are printed in English only, and therefore can

[1] I am glad to learn that this reproach is no longer deserved. I am informed that since the war a number of British firms have, by means of wisely-selected representatives, taken advantage of the ready market, and a profusion of British goods, notably woollens and linens, are now to be seen in Bucarest.

only be circulated among those people who understand the language thoroughly. Even for them the difficulties are great. How often I have been called upon to reduce shillings to francs, and to explain the difference between "metre" and "yard"! Then the various contractions in a catalogue!

There are no facilities for trade between Roumania and England such as exist between Roumania and other countries. For instance, one sends an order to Paris or Vienna, and on the arrival of the goods in Bucarest is advised of the fact by the postal authorities. The consignee then proceeds to the custom-house, inspects the goods, and if satisfactory pays the price on the spot. If not, they are sent back. But in sending to England for goods what a difficult business it is! Say a costume is required. First of all the measurements have to be accurately translated into English. Then the price has to be calculated and the money forwarded at the same time as the order. Should there be even a trifling error, some pence too few or too many, there is trouble and delay and the matter is difficult to arrange. I believe, however, that there is big business to be done not only with Roumania, but with other of the Balkan States. English people do not readily put themselves out of the way to capture trade, nor do they easily adapt themselves to the tastes, wishes, or customs of foreigners. Since the war there has, of course, been the exchange difficulty, but that will not always remain.

Let me give one example of English conservatism. A certain English firm was approached as to the sending out of some agricultural machines. Now the peasantry of the Near East are very fond

of bright colours, such as red, blue, and green, and the first machines which arrived, painted in a uniform shade of ugly grey, failed to please. A suggestion was forwarded to the firm regarding the colour of the machines, but the reply received was that grey was the standard colour which had been decided on by the firm for all their machines and it could not be altered. The result was that the order was cancelled.

I must not forget to mention that there is one English factory in Roumania for the making of calico and linen. It was established some years ago by a well-known Manchester merchant, Mr Lamb, who found it decidedly more advantageous to have the yarn sent out from England, and to manufacture it in the country where it was to be sold. By so doing he escaped the enormous tax on all manufactured goods imported into the country. The factory is a fine building, lighted throughout by electricity. The manager's house, a most comfortable residence, is only a short distance away. Cottages for the work-people, and a canteen where food can be purchased at a reasonable rate, are also situated near the factory. These buildings cover a quite respectable area.

It is the law in Roumania that every foreign factory must employ a certain number of Roumanian workers—two-thirds of the whole. Therefore only skilled workmen were brought from England, the unskilled labour being provided in the country. Lack of skill, however, was not the only difficulty which had to be contended with. The native workers were unreliable and indolent—let us say at once, lazy. In going over the factory, I was told by the foreman that even the unskilled worker could

earn from twenty to twenty-five francs weekly if he were industrious; and one must remember that twenty-five francs (£1) counts for considerably more in Roumania with such a class than in England, as food is so very much cheaper. But the trouble was the indolence of the people and the oft-recurring saints' days. As soon as the worker had a little money in hand he felt that he had earned the right to rest from his labour, for a time at any rate. As for the idea that work might be done on a saint's day, that could not be entertained for a moment. Naturally, under such conditions it is most difficult to carry on work in the factory, or even to maintain a proper discipline.

I regret to learn that this factory was badly damaged during the war.

There is also an English bank in Bucarest—the old-established Bank of Roumania, Ltd., which has always been held in the highest esteem by the Roumanians, and serves a very important purpose in the trade relations between the two countries.

At Azuga, on the way from Sinaia to Predeal, there are a few factories, for the most part controlled by Germans. The glass factory is the most interesting one to visit, as one can follow the whole process from the mixing of the sand, potash, etc., to the turning out of the perfect bottles and glasses. For the most part the articles turned out are of an inferior quality, but a superior class of goods is manufactured from time to time. For instance, some very artistic glass cups and saucers are turned out at Azuga. They are made of fairly thick glass, quite smooth, and finished off with a gilt band round the edge of the cup. Wash-hand basins and

jugs made of similar glass, and various little accessories for the toilet table, are also manufactured here. A dainty little cake-stand for afternoon tea with glass plates instead of china on each *étage* is a novelty that I have seen nowhere else.

A cloth manufactory in the same village turns out quite respectable goods. The texture and finish of the material are not what could be termed first class, but for its durability I can vouch. A cycling costume that I had made of cloth manufactured at Azuga wore well for years ; in fact, I could not wear it out, and finally gave it away.

There are a few breweries in Roumania, and one of the best known is at Azuga. Azuga beer is very light, not heady at all. It bears some resemblance to Munich beer in quality but not in price. Beer in Roumania is very expensive, a bottle about the size of a "small Bass" costing one franc. The reason for this is the enormous tax imposed on the output, which is at the rate of 50 per cent. The tax is imposed by the Government in the interest of the wine-growing industry, which is the national industry of the country.

There are a few beer-gardens in Bucarest where a military band is engaged once or twice a week, but they are not by any means so frequented as they would be, say, in Germany, partly owing to the cost of the beer, and partly because it is not considered *chic* to be seen in a beer-garden. What a delight it is when travelling in summer to remember that, once over the frontier, one can indulge in a cool, foaming glass of beer at a moderate cost, the beverage being so very much cheaper both in Hungary and Austria !

Roumania is, in parts, a wine-growing country. The grapes, although small, have a very fine flavour. The wine is light in quality, the best kinds being Cotnar, which resembles Tokay, the delicious Hungarian wine, and Dragaşani, a white wine with an excellent taste. Roumanian wines are by no means expensive; one could buy a bottle of quite good wine for one franc before the war.

Sugar factories have also been established in the country, beetroot being of course employed in its manufacture. The sugar looks all right; it is beautifully white, but it is very hard, takes a very long time to melt, and does not sweeten as much as cane-sugar. It is also rather expensive, and cost no less than 6d. per pound before the war. A curious thing is that over the frontier, in Bulgaria or Serbia, Roumanian sugar could be bought at a much cheaper rate than in the country.

Cheese factories are numerous throughout the country, and in addition to the production of the national cheeses many foreign cheeses, such as Emmenthaler, Roquefort, etc., are fairly well imitated. Sheep's cheese, unknown in this country, is one of the best of the Roumanian products. It is very white in appearance, mild to the taste, not at all piquant.

One peculiarity of sheep's cheese is that it is made in an oblong shape and then packed in bark. When served at table slices are cut right through the bark. The cheese has rather a peculiar flavour from its contact with the bark, but this is not at all disagreeable, indeed, rather the contrary. It is sold in very small quantities, as sheep give so little milk.

I was present once at sheep-milking time, and found it a most entertaining sight. The sheep were driven into a small enclosure at one corner of which was a flap-door. When the flap was raised, the sheep nearest the door saw a means of escape from its uncomfortable surroundings and made a dash for it, only to be caught by the hind leg by the man seated near, who did not let go till he had got every available drop of milk from the animal. On an average one could count upon half a glass of milk from each sheep. But the dexterity of the man in catching his prey, his skill in the quick milking of the animal in spite of its struggles, then its final rush for freedom, were all very amusing to witness.

The petrol wells of Roumania are, I should think, well known by this time. Different companies have been formed for the working of the wells, but the best known is the Steaua Romana, in which since the war British capital has become largely interested. Rockefeller made a great bid in order to get full control of the oil-fields, as Roumanian petrol is of decidedly better quality than any other, not excluding that of America. The negotiations were the cause of much discussion and difference of opinion—one party wishing to accept Rockefeller's proposals, the other saying they were traitors to their country, and were selling themselves and what they possessed to the Americans. I once said to a Roumanian gentleman, "Why not form companies of your own and work the oil-fields in your own interests?" "Oh no," he replied; "in selling them to the foreigners we get the money and they do the work." The reply may have been an indication of the natural indolence of an eastern nation, but it

was also, I think, prompted by consideration of capital.

The discovery and consequent exploitation of petroleum in the country caused a great influx of Americans, and therefore our British colony was increased to a considerable extent, as Britishers and Americans naturally hung together. As Rockefeller, in spite of obstacles, finally succeeded in getting very large interests in the oil-fields, his agent, Mr Chamberlain, and family resided for a considerable time in Bucarest.

The most important oil-field is that of Campina, on the way to Sinaia. The district seems to be so saturated with oil that it has rendered the whole countryside intolerable. One begins to smell it on leaving Ploesti. Luckily it does not extend so far as Sinaia, otherwise that charming resort would be rendered uninhabitable.

The discovery of petroleum has made the fortunes of many people in Roumania. There was M. M——, for instance, who was, I believe, of gipsy origin, as he did not even possess a surname when he began life. By dint of industry he managed to become possessor of a small estate, and one fine day when petrol was discovered on it he realised that he could count himself a millionaire. He immediately took the name of his land for his own, built a magnificent residence in the Calea Victorie, and later on his youngest daughter formed a matrimonial alliance with a member of the aristocracy.

A few paper-mills are to be found in the country, and a walk through one or other of them is very interesting. Nothing but wood is employed in the factory. The great logs are brought in direct from

the neighbouring forests, then cut up, pressed, reduced to a pulp, and finally turned out as sheets of paper. It is chiefly paper for packing that is made, but a certain quantity of notepaper is also made. I was presented with a box of it, but it is of very inferior quality, and does not possess the gloss or finish of our own.

Coal has been found in Roumania, though not in any great quantity. I was told, however, that the quality was very good. Roumania is more an agricultural than an industrial country, and wheat is the great source of income. Everything, trips to Paris or Monte Carlo, new clothes, opera-boxes, etc., turns upon the question, "Will there be a good harvest?" When snow begins to fall early in winter, farmers are very pleased; they say snow means gold for the country, as it protects the seed from the severe cold and from the frost which is sure to follow.

CHAPTER IX

Severe restrictions on Jews—The Jews as traders—Their vigorous methods—They exploit the peasants of the countryside as wine-shopkeepers and moneylenders—The Jews as tenants of estates sublet at rack rents—The original proprietor cannot see that he has any share of responsibility for the grinding down of the peasants—An anti-Jewish riot in the Lipscani—A family of Paris Jews make a large fortune in a fashionable shop in a few years—A Jewish wedding which is a double one.

JEWS are not considered citizens even when natives of the country and doing military service. They cannot be officers in the army, nor are they allowed to rise even to the rank of corporal. No Jew can take a bursary at a university. In Roumanian primary schools (which are free to Roumanian children) Jews must pay, and indeed are only received when there happens to be room for them.

Jews are not allowed to practise law or to hold any Government office without being specially admitted to citizenship, a privilege very difficult to obtain; and they cannot become teachers in State schools except for foreign languages. They are not allowed to buy any property in cities or towns.

In many towns Jews have schools of their own, as well as a hospital and a bathing establishment. There were, roughly speaking, nearly one million Jews in Roumania, where members of the race have been settled for the last three hundred years. They

came principally from Russia and Galicia. In olden times, when the country was still under Turkish rule, a Jewish king was once appointed, who, however, only reigned over the country for the space of three days.

Jews form an important section of the population, as most of the retail trade is carried on by them.

The young men of the upper classes in Roumania must all have professions. They study medicine, engineering, law, or go into the army, but soil their hands with trade they will not. That is why all the trade of Roumania is in the hands of the Jews. They are shopkeepers or moneylenders, but it will be noticed that no Jew or Jewess ever undertakes menial service.

In the Strada Lipscani and the neighbouring streets almost all the shopkeepers are Jews, and when business is slack they are always to be found at their shop doors pressing the passers-by to enter and inspect the goods.

Woe to any unsophisticated peasant who ventures to go alone to that neighbourhood to buy some article of clothing; he risks being torn in pieces. I witnessed an occurrence one day which highly amused me. A man of the poorer class was sauntering along looking at the different suits of clothes exposed to view, evidently with the intention of buying one. Suddenly he was seized upon by two opposing shopkeepers, each of whom began at once to drag the poor man in the direction of his particular shop, at the same time extolling his wares in a loud voice. At first the man laughed, taking it as a joke, but he was soon convinced that his captors meant serious business. He was pulled to one shop, then

to the other, again and again, until I began to expect every moment that the sleeves would be torn out of his coat. However, in the end the stronger of the two shopkeepers gained the victory, and landed his prize safely in his shop. Very probably he did not let him out again till he had spent most, if not all, of the money he had in his pocket.

Jews are not liked in Roumania, although the Roumanians are ready enough to resort to them when they are in money difficulties. They demand an exorbitant interest on any money lent, the rate not being regulated in Roumania as it is, for instance, in France; and this circumstance probably helps to intensify the feeling of dislike that many have for the Jews.

The Jew has it all his own way in the country districts, and is hated accordingly. He runs the cabaret or wine-shop, but is quite willing to lend money at the same time. When the peasant has had bad crops, or been too lazy to work, he has recourse to the Jew, to whom he must give good security for the money he borrows. The result is in most cases that one head of his stock after another falls into the clutches of the moneylender, their owner finding it impossible to redeem them, and he may count himself lucky if he gets out of the Jew's hands still having a roof over his head. The Roumanians are an improvident race, and the fault lies on their side as much as on that of the Jews, although they will never confess it. All their railings are against the exorbitant interest demanded from them. It is not to be denied that the Jew oppresses them when he gets the chance; but then why give him the chance?

Those people too of the better class who possess some land but do not wish to trouble about the working of it, generally let it to a Jew, as he offers a better price than anyone else. He in his turn sublets it, and naturally demands the highest price he can get. Then the Roumanian laments about how the poor peasantry are ground down by the Jews; but, as I remarked once to a gentleman, "Why then let your land out to a Jew?" "Well, you see, he pays a better price," was the naïve reply. So it seemed to me there was no difference whatever between the two. The Roumanian was not unwilling to profit by the Jew, who in his turn got it out of the people under him.

On the whole, Jews are fairly well treated in Roumania. Sometimes the always-present underlying irritation against them finds vent in a sudden raid on their shops by an angry mob.

Such a raid occurred some years ago, and I was an eye-witness of many of the incidents. Most damage was caused in the Lipscani, where the shop windows were smashed and the goods strewn about the street. But, in spite of all this damage, I did not hear of any authenticated case in which a Jew suffered bodily harm. Of course they had to lie low for a time, but little by little they ventured to reopen their shops and have them repaired, and all went on as before.

The Roumanian authorities received all claims for damages, and reimbursed the claimants; but a few of the better-class firms refused to put in any claim —they were magnanimous enough to bear the loss. Probably they thought to themselves that they could put on an extra franc or two on all goods in

the future and so indemnify themselves. The Jew is wily enough to take care of his own interests.

A Jew once came from Paris to help in a shop kept by Jews. After some time he sent for his brother, who also entered the business, which presently succeeded so well that the establishment was enlarged. A brother-in-law and his wife then arrived, till finally the whole family installed themselves in the Lipscani, and took over the business themselves from the original proprietors. All articles of clothing, of the toilet, everything, in fact, was brought from Paris, which was, of course, a great attraction for the Roumanians. The shop finally became the most fashionable establishment in Bucarest, and succeeded so well that the whole family at length returned to Paris, having amassed a considerable fortune. The shop passed into the hands of a Swiss company, whether Jews or not I cannot say, but the business lost to some extent its high-class character.

There are two Jewish synagogues in Bucarest, the one more recently built being a very fine building indeed. I went there once to a Jewish wedding, and found it most interesting. On such an occasion there always stands at the entrance to the synagogue a group of gentlemen, one of whom at once offers his arm and leads you to a seat. The time before the arrival of the bride is well employed in admiring the costumes of the ladies, which show that no expense has been spared, and also noting the preparations for the ceremony, which seem strange to our unaccustomed eyes.

At the upper end of the synagogue is a raised

platform with a canopy over it. On the platform is a table on which there is a carafe of wine and one small goblet, and near the table sits the expectant bridegroom, with his hat on, awaiting the bride. The bridesmaids and near relatives have seats also quite near the platform. At length, when everyone's eyes are anxiously turned towards the door to catch the first glimpse of the bride, a distant sound of singing is heard. The sound draws nearer, and then one sees that it is the Rabbi, who comes slowly up the synagogue chanting and looking curiously at the people present, who are assuredly not all Jews. The Rabbi on this particular occasion squints, the effect being most comical as he casts his eyes now to the right and now to the left. A few minutes later the bride arrives and comes slowly up the aisle, all in bridal white, unaccompanied, save by her mother, who follows some paces behind.

The bride and groom now take their stand under the canopy, and the service begins. There is a good deal of chanting, and finally the moment arrives when the wine is offered. The bridegroom drinks first, and then presents the goblet to the bride. The goblet is then smashed, as it must not be used again under any circumstances. At the end of the service congratulations are offered, and the wedding-party proceeds to the house of the bride in order to partake of the wedding-feast.

The marriage at which I was present was a double one, two sisters being married at the same time. The younger of the two was pretty, and had been engaged for some months (a rare occurrence, as Jewish engagements are of short duration), but the

parents would not hear of the wedding taking place till a husband could be found for the elder girl. The younger to marry first was a thing not to be thought of. Finally, a suitable *parti* was found, and the two sisters were married on the same day.

CHAPTER X

The educational system—Long hours of study and no fresh air or exercise—Take Jonescu, as Minister of Education, introduces the bath-tub to the schools, and provides for walking exercise—School-fare is never good—A water famine—Examinations and show questions—English poetry translated literally—German literature taught in *French*, the pupils being examined in *Roumanian*—Lack of books in the Roumanian language—The school fêtes—Convents and proselytising—A girl who despised all the pleasures of the world and ran away to become a nun.

EDUCATION is free and compulsory throughout Roumania, but in many rural districts non-attendance at school is winked at, especially at harvest-time. The Government primary schools in the capital are chiefly attended by the lower classes; children of the better-class families either attend private schools or have instruction at home. But in any case children are expected to present themselves at the Government examinations, and to pass the first four classes.

Private schools in the capital are usually well attended, some having as many as four hundred pupils, the children from the provinces always being sent to Bucarest for their education. Although very much is expected from Roumanian children, they are sadly handicapped. Their own tongue is grossly neglected, instruction being usually given them in French. They are, besides, taught English and German, and sometimes Latin and Greek. A

great deal of attention is devoted to music and painting, and of late years practical training in dressmaking, cooking, and housekeeping is given in the schools.

Naturally, with so many subjects in the curriculum, there is not much time to lose if one is to get all one's work done for the next day in a certain time. Very many written exercises are demanded of the pupils, in all languages, the consequence being that the handwriting is atrocious, and time is too limited to allow of any improvement being even attempted in this direction.

School begins at 8 o'clock a.m., continuing till midday, when there is an interval for dinner and recreation till 2 o'clock. Lessons are then resumed, and continue till 6 p.m. Of course this does not mean that every child is continually occupied for eight hours. A pupil may have only four classes to attend on one day, perhaps five on another day, or sometimes only three—but the rest of the time must be devoted to the preparation of lessons for the next day. Preparation ended, the pupil may employ herself as she likes, provided she remains quiet, as, of course, lessons may be going on in the class-room in which she has no part.

These hours are very long, and when one considers that no time is given for outdoor exercise, one cannot wonder that the children grow up puny and stunted. In a well-known school in Bucarest outdoor exercise, fresh air, and baths were unknown. The class-rooms were overheated, there being a large stove in each, and windows were never opened. Once a fortnight the children of so many classes (they were taken in rotation) were assembled in the

recreation room, where the washing of their feet was supervised by the German governess with all due solemnity! This was the only concession to cleanliness, as of course colds would have to be risked if further ablutions were indulged in!

These customs were somewhat changed a few years ago (perhaps I may be permitted to say that it was upon my representation), when Mons. Take Jonescu became Minister of Instruction. He, as an intelligent and enlightened man, readily saw the evils that were certain to accrue to the youth of the country from such an upbringing. Regulations were framed insisting upon baths being provided in all public and private schools, and upon time being allowed for the children to take a walk daily of at least an hour. These innovations were by no means favourably received at the time either by heads of schools or by the children themselves, and it would not astonish me to learn that things have fallen back into the old way. Breakfast is served at 7 o'clock, consisting of a cup of coffee and a *kipfel* (small roll) without butter. Midday is the luncheon hour, when the dishes are generally varied, but never appetising (school-fare never is). Sometimes meat is served stewed with quinces, potatoes, or other vegetables, and a pudding made of maize flour liberally besprinkled with grated cheese. At 4 o'clock a piece of dry bread is given to each child, and at 6 o'clock comes dinner. This generally consists of a thin soup, rarely palatable, the second course being the meat from which the soup has been made. Surely such meat was never seen anywhere else! It is generally perfectly white, as if it had been stewed until every drop of nourishment had

been extracted from it. This, together with vegetables, forms the second course. If a governess cannot bring herself to swallow it, or can plead a bad headache, she may be allowed a *bifteck*; but as the beef-steaks are difficult to distinguish from a bit of shoe-leather, little is gained by the exchange.

Stewed fruit, or a light pudding, ends the evening meal. The governesses are allowed a glass of the thin red wine of the country, but the children are obliged to slake their thirst with water. Such water! It used to look as if a tiny drop of milk had fallen into it by mistake, and had left it a muddy colour. The water of Bucarest was very bad when I first went there, but of late years it has greatly improved, as filtering-beds have been arranged for the water to pass through before entering the capital. A scheme was mooted for bringing water from Sinaia, but as the cost would have been very great, the plan was not proceeded with. If it had, there would be no capital in Europe better provided with water, as that of Sinaia is the best I have ever tasted. Clear as crystal, and perfectly cold, as all mountain water is, it forms a refreshing draught on a hot summer day.

But even in the mountains the supply may run short, as happened one exceedingly hot summer. I was at Sinaia at the time, and it was the only occasion in my whole life when I envied a queen. I heard that her Majesty alone amongst all the people of the land was able to indulge in the luxury of a daily bath.

But to return. The examinations are usually in the month of June, both State examinations and those in private schools. Upon the occasion of the

first school examination at which I was present I did feel astonished. The room in which it was held looked rather imposing, being handsomely decorated with tall plants and plenty of flowers. The relatives and friends of the pupils had been invited to be present, and a goodly number responded. A class came up to be examined in German grammar, but to my amazement only two questions were put by the teacher. These two questions *were put alternately to every pupil in the class*, and the first answer being correct, all the others were of course also correct, as each pupil interrogated had just heard the reply of the preceding pupil.

The explanation—such as it was—came later on. In preparing my own class (for I had an engagement at this school for a short time), I was instructed by the headmistress as to the questions to be asked. She remarked, "It makes such a bad impression if the pupils fail to answer correctly!" English poetry was learned by heart, first being translated *literally* word by word. They would have been remarkably clever children who could have made any sense whatever out of it as so rendered; but the headmistress decreed that it should be so, and so it had to be.

German was even more curiously taught. Roumanian children do not like German, so they are never very proficient in it. Not knowing the language sufficiently well to study in it, German literature was taught in *French*; and when the girls presented themselves for the State examination, they were questioned in *Roumanian*!

One may wonder why they do not learn in their own tongue; the explanation is, to a large extent,

simply the lack of books.[1] There are no advanced books in the Roumanian language dealing with foreign subjects, so the children are obliged to use French, a language in which they are more or less proficient.

Holidays in Roumania are much longer than in England—three weeks at Christmas, two weeks at Easter, and from three to three and a half months in summer, besides the numerous saints' days, which are always religiously kept.

Just before breaking up for the summer holidays, some of the private schools give a little fête. The children act a short play ; there are various songs and pianoforte solos as part of the entertainment, and then dancing is indulged in till a late hour. At one of these entertainments I happened to be present, and was very much—shall I merely say—amused ? to find that although dancing was kept up for the visitors (the children were sent to bed) till 3 a.m., nothing more substantial than a *dulçeata* was provided by way of refreshments. At some of the schools the " names-day " of the headmistress is observed as a holiday. Each child must perforce contribute a certain sum towards the gift that is to be presented. I have heard some dilatory ones admonished in class to bring their contribution not later than a certain date, as the present had then to be bought.

A considerable sum of money is thus collected, and as the recipient of the present is always sounded as to her wishes, a very practical as well as a handsome

[1] I believe that, since the period—several years ago—of which I write, this state of affairs has been remedied to a considerable extent.

gift is usually obtained. One present I remember seeing consisted of three lovely carpets of Roumanian manufacture, really beautiful in design.

After the presentation the children are of course free for the rest of the day, and are regaled with bon-bons, as a slight return for their generosity.

Roumanian children are often sent for their education to one or other of the Roman Catholic convents scattered throughout the country, the nuns of which invariably belong to some French sisterhood. Some years ago there was a great stir in Bucarest, and considerable feeling was aroused against the nuns, as they were accused of trying to proselytise. An outcry was raised by the people that the faith of their forefathers was in danger (not that I ever saw it religiously adhered to), and some society ladies having leisure just then for a new fad, banded themselves together in order to protect it. A service was held in St George's, one of the principal churches, after which a procession was formed and passed through the streets to the palace of the Metropolitan, in order to present him with an address assuring him of the constant adherence of the people of the country to their own religion, and protesting at the same time against any attempts to subvert their children.

The agitation caused considerable talk for a time and then died a natural death. But it is a fact that Roumanian girls who have been educated in a French convent rarely retain a genuine love for their own country, its customs, or its language. That is one reason why the Roumanian language is so much neglected. It has happened that girls who have been educated in France fall utterly under

the influence of the nuns, and go over to Roman Catholicism.

I remember the case of one girl who did so. She was a Greek, living in Bucarest with her parents, who, although they were not rich, did what they thought best for their only child in sending her to Paris to be educated. The girl was very musical, and probably the nuns thought she would be useful to them on that account although she had no money. She returned to her parents in course of time, but was always restless, wishing to return to the convent, and finally confessed to her mother her great desire to become a nun. Her mother, being very much against the idea, set before her all the disadvantages that would accrue from such a course, and in order to distract her from dwelling upon it gave her every amusement that was in her power. Balls, concerts, fêtes followed each other in quick succession, but all proved unavailing. The girl left home one afternoon, ostensibly to visit a friend, and the next that was heard of her was a telegram from the frontier informing her parents that she was on her way back to the convent. She became a nun, and as far as I know she was lost to her parents. This was not by any means the only case of which I had knowledge.

CHAPTER XI

Take Jonescu, an enlightened Minister of Education—"La bouche d'or"—His personality—A true Roumanian in his almost Oriental love of luxury—His town and country houses—Madame Jonescu as an authoress—Her menagerie of pets—The love-story of Take Jonescu—The meeting of the law student and the English girl—A trip to England follows—Obstacles are overcome and a happy marriage follows.

TAKE JONESCU, as he is familiarly known all over Roumania (Take being the diminutive of Demetre) was a most enlightened Minister of Education. He is an exceptionally clever man; gifted with powers of oratory far above the average, and is known in his own country as "La bouche d'or." Although Take Jonescu has never yet been Prime Minister, it is certain that he will one day be called upon to occupy that position, which he is so well qualified to fill. He has held successively the portfolios of Justice, Education, and Finance, and is now rendering signal service to his country as Foreign Minister.

When the Conservative party is not in power, M. Jonescu follows his profession. He is the most brilliant advocate in Roumania, and the side that succeeds in retaining his services in a case is almost certain of success.

It has been asserted that M. Jonescu is a rich man, but this is scarcely the case. He has little or no *private* means, being simply dependent upon his pro-

fessional income, which is, however, very large. It is for him a very great sacrifice (from a monetary point of view) to accept a portfolio, as the salary paid to a cabinet minister in Roumania is only 30,000 francs (£1200).

In private life M. Jonescu has a charming personality. He is most kind-hearted, and ready to take the utmost trouble to help anyone in time of difficulty. His kind deeds are innumerable, and are always performed in such a modest manner that they are very often unheard of by the general public. The just cause of many a poor client has been espoused by Take Jonescu without thought or hope of reward.

He is a true Roumanian in his almost Oriental love of luxury. His town house in Bucarest is imposing. It is beautifully furnished, and always hospitably open to foreign visitors. But it was his villa at Sinaia in the Carpathians—where the present writer has often had the good fortune to be a guest—which excited the greatest admiration. It was a charmingly situated and perfectly appointed house, commanding a lovely view of the valley of the Prahova, and was an ideal home in which to recruit from the cares of professional or political life.

Many English guests were entertained there, and this is largely due to the fact that the late Madame Jonescu was herself an Englishwoman. She was possessed of great musical talent and was an authoress of no mean repute, as those can testify who have read her fascinating book *Only a Singer*. She was an able helpmeet for her husband, endowed as she was with very real abilities.

Both husband and wife were great lovers of

animals, and it may almost be said that they possessed a small menagerie—dogs, deer, a bear, and a monkey being amongst their pets. It was chiefly owing to the efforts of Madame Jonescu that the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" established itself in Bucarest, where the work has long been carried on in a most efficient manner.

Of the ten dogs that Madame Jonescu possessed some years ago "Charlie" was decidedly the favourite. A large retriever, with a fine head and honest brown eyes, Charlie was made much of by everybody, and consequently thought much of himself. He was very fond of driving, and when the carriage came to the door for an afternoon's visiting, Charlie seemed to think it was there for his special benefit. He always jumped into the carriage first, and there remained barking with all his might till in desperation someone would place a rolled-up newspaper in his mouth. Then perforce he became quiet, as he would not let go anything entrusted to him until permitted to do so.

Poor Charlie suffered very much in summer from the heat, and therefore at such times as his mistress was abroad, Charlie became a boarder at the Hotel Joseph in Sinaia. As the favourite dog of his mistress, he was treated by all the waiters with great respect, not one of them even presuming to speak of him other than as Domnele Charlie, *i.e.* Master Charlie. Every afternoon he was taken for a constitutional, either by one of the waiters or by a visitor who could be trusted. It was considered quite a privilege to be permitted to take Charlie for a walk. In spite of all this care, poor Charlie had to

go the way of all flesh, and he had many successors in his mistress's affections.

Another favourite pet was a bear which had been presented by a gentleman returning from the Caucasian mountains. This bear roamed at will in the courtyard, his further excursions being prevented by a man armed with a big stick, who was supposed to be always on guard.

If this man happened to be off duty for a short time, it was then Master Bruin's great delight to penetrate into the house, much to the consternation of the maids. He proved such an adept at opening doors that one only felt safe when they were locked.

One afternoon Madame Jonescu was seated in the drawing-room chatting with some visitors. A slight noise was heard at the door, which slowly opened, giving entrance to Master Bear. Great was the dismay among the ladies, who completely lost their heads and fled to every corner of the room. Fortunately Madame Jonescu retained her presence of mind (she had no fear whatever of animals), took the bear by the collar and gently led him to the door. Once there, a call soon brought the bear's attendant to the rescue, who took possession of his charge with strict injunctions not to allow him so much liberty in future.

As time went on, Bruin became too great a burden, so was given over to the authorities in Sinaia to place in the small menagerie that they had established near the monastery.

Before leaving the subject of pets, I may just mention one other—the monkey.

Armina by name and vicious by nature, this animal was not a favourite with anyone but her

mistress. Although confined in a very strong cage, her fits of temper were so violent that she sometimes succeeded in breaking one or two of the bars. Once out of the cage, she careered up the trees and along the roofs of the neighbouring houses, and it was a work of great difficulty to induce her to return. The policeman who patrolled the street, and who had already made the acquaintance of Armina—indeed he was a special favourite with her—had often to be appealed to for assistance. It was very amusing to see how readily she responded to his blandishments, and he would return in triumph with Armina snugly cuddled up in his arms. The policeman was very proud of his friendship with Madame Jonescu's pet, and went so far as to have himself photographed with Armina in his arms.

I am tempted here into a digression to tell a little story in which this same policeman figured. I think I have not mentioned before that Mr Alfred Richards, the brother of Madame Jonescu and a member of the English bar, spent some years in Roumania, where he was a great favourite in all circles. His health was delicate and the climate suited him. Mr Richards died a few years ago in England.

On one occasion Mr Richards was entrusted by King Carol with a special mission to the Porte. He chose to take with him as a sort of official attendant our friend (and Armina's) the policeman. Mr Richards was decorated by the Sultan on the accomplishment of his mission, and it was expected that the policeman would receive some acknowledgment in accordance with his humble rank. I daresay small things interested us in that distant land, but

I remember there was much speculation as to what Gheorgie would get, and what he would do with it. In the result we learned that he received from the Sultan a very considerable sum of money as a tip, and spent the whole of it on a splendid diamond ring; a curious investment, but by no means always a bad one in Bucarest.

The love story of M. and Mme. Jonescu was of a romantic nature. He was a young student travelling to Paris in order to finish his studies when a very pretty young English girl entered the compartment in which he was seated. Seeing that she was travelling alone, he gave her, as a gallant Roumanian, every assistance in his power. Susceptible to beauty as all Roumanians are, it was with him a real case of love at first sight. He followed up his advantage so eagerly, that Paris for the time was forgotten, and he crossed to England at once in order to make the acquaintance of the young lady's parents. There were some obstacles, but in spite of them love carried the day, and that part of the story ended in a happy marriage.

CHAPTER XII

The National Theatre—The students' riot on behalf of the national language—Racing as a fashionable amusement—English jockeys and trainers—The Battle of Flowers—The devotees of the card-table—Rafting on the Bistritza, a glorious sport.

THE Roumanians as an Eastern nation have all the Oriental's love of show, of glitter, and of pleasure. Theatres, concerts, and cinematographs are always well attended. Unfortunately very late hours are kept, no entertainment beginning before 9 o'clock p.m., and as the Roumanian has the Oriental's dislike of punctuality, the hour is very often still later. After the theatre, which is only over between midnight and 1 a.m., it is *de rigueur* to go to Capsa's to drink tea or eat an ice, according to the season. It is no wonder that Bucarest is called a little Paris; it resembles that gay city very much, especially in its night-life. No matter at what hour of the night you drive through Calea Victorie, the street is always brilliantly illuminated, cafés and restaurants are open, and numbers of people are still walking about.

As a rule the Roumanians are not very keen on their own theatre, but when a foreign company of actors is announced (especially if it is a French company) there is a rush for seats. Prices are raised on such occasions, as much as 300 francs being charged for a box.

There are two fairly decent theatres in Bucarest, the National and the Lyric. The former was the scene of a great disturbance one evening a few years ago. Some society ladies wished to perform a play, the proceeds to be devoted to charity. This was quite a laudable object, but the manner in which they designed to carry it out met with opposition on the part of a section of the public. The play, it was announced, was to be performed in *French* and at the *National* Theatre. Anyone who has lived in Bucarest will be fully aware of the dislike of society ladies to everything distinctively Roumanian —whether it be the language, the customs, or anything else. On the other hand some of the people, and especially the students, see no reason why their own language should be so neglected, and on this particular occasion they determined to protest. The National Theatre, they declared, was for the national drama in the national speech. The persons responsible for the projected entertainment paid no attention whatever to the general discontent, but continued their rehearsals. The evening arrived, but long before the hour fixed for the performance the square in front of the theatre was filled with immense crowds of students and others, whom no efforts of the police could disperse. Access was also gained to the building itself and it was held against all comers. National songs were sung, and the crowd gradually became so excited that it was ripe for any mischief.

Woe betide anyone who tried to enter the National Theatre that night. Each carriage as it arrived was immediately surrounded, the horses taken out, the windows smashed, and the occupants could

think themselves lucky if they escaped with nothing worse than a torn dress or a knocked-in hat. The damage done in the neighbourhood was considerable, windows were smashed, and one house especially was almost wrecked. The rumour ran that in the mêlée a student had been killed, and was concealed in the theatre, but although this excited the crowd to frenzy, no confirmation of the report was ever forthcoming. In the end the students carried their point and the play was not performed.

Some time after this a society was formed, the members of which bound themselves to protect the Roumanian language, to speak it in public and private, and not allow it to be ousted from its place as the national tongue. From this date the National Theatre was reserved for Roumanian plays. The Lyric, which is a much smaller theatre, was given up to foreign companies.

Riding is not practised in Bucarest to any great extent. A few ladies have been stirred to emulation of Queen Marie, who is an expert horsewoman, but they are only a few. Roumanians are, it must always be remembered, an Eastern people, and they do not show great aptitude for violent exercise of any kind.

Some members of the Jockey Club (formed by an Englishman years ago) keep a stud of horses, and races are held twice a year, in spring and autumn. These races are very notable events, and they are very well attended, as they are always patronised by members of the royal family, and of course everybody who is anybody must follow suit.

Very smart costumes are ordered for the occasion, one well-known leader of fashion vies with another

as to which will be smarter, and it would be a bold person who would aver that the vast concourse of people assembled on the race-course is simply there to follow the events of the programme, or from a general love of horses. I rather lean to the opinion that the majority go in order to study the toilets.

It very often happens that these toilets are spoiled before the day is over by the rain coming down in torrents. It has been remarked time after time that rain is sure to fall on the first day of the races, and fall it generally does with a vengeance.

The jockeys are of course all English; indeed, M. Marghiloman has a small English colony on his estate—a trainer, and several jockeys, who with their wives and families make up quite a population. M. D—— also keeps a stud, and of course the army officers take part in turf matters and enter their horses for different races. The " Derby " (on a small scale) is *the* race; I believe the prize is 5000 francs (£200), and is always given by the Jockey Club.

The month of June was generally decided upon for the " Battle of Flowers," an event which always took place at the Chaussée, this popular drive lending itself much better to such purposes than any other of the places of public resort. The " Battle of Flowers " was arranged by the ladies of Bucarest society, the proceeds being devoted to some charitable purpose—" La Crèche " (the foundling hospital) or some similar institution. If the day were fine the Chaussée presented a very animated appearance from an early hour in the afternoon, all the economical souls going as early as possible in order

to take possession of the numerous benches along the route, and thus avoid the expense of a chair.

The Chaussée is situated at the end of the town and is something similar to the Prater in Vienna, but on a much smaller scale. There is a broad carriage way, planted on both sides with beautiful lime trees, extending for miles, till it finally ends in the open country. At each side of this broad way is a walk for pedestrians, well furnished with seats, and at the right is also a pathway for riders. The Chaussée, it may be imagined, is very gay when, added to its natural beauties, it is tastefully decorated with pretty devices here and there, and the national colours of Roumania.

Let me briefly describe the last battle I was present at a year or two ago.

In the booths at the entrance pretty girls were stationed to whom we willingly paid the entrance fee of one franc. For decorated carriages the charge was 10 francs, non-decorated 5 francs, and bicycles 2 francs. Bands were stationed at regular intervals along the route, enlivening the proceedings with their strains. As the gaily decorated carriages began to arrive, the excitement grew. There was lavish admiration for the first on the scene, but as carriage after carriage rolled by, one prettier than the other, we could only gaze and gaze and admire. I remember that Mme. C.'s carriage, decorated with great bouquets of white marguerites and scarlet poppies, scored a great success on this occasion. Then the officers' brake appeared, not only decorated with flowers, but containing a bevy of pretty young girls, each one wearing a very effective crimson head-dress made of paper. There followed a peasant

ox-waggon decorated in true country fashion with a canopy of foliage and bunches of field flowers. Here again life interest was given to the picture by a pretty group of young girls all dressed in Roumanian costume. Here and there a rider with a decorated saddle, or a cyclist with some fantastic floral display, excited some applause, but the admiration was universal when Princess Marie (as she then was) arrived in her carriage splendidly adorned with roses of all colours. Princess Elizabeth, who drove her smart little dog-cart, also came in for a liberal and well-deserved share of admiration. She and her perfect little equipage made a charming picture.

Now the battle began in real earnest. As the two lines of carriages passed and repassed each other, the air seemed full of dainty little bouquets, thrown from one carriage to another. The pedestrians on the foot-paths took part also in the gay contest, and there was many a merry interchange not only of flowers, but of jests, as acquaintances recognised each other in the crowd. Princess Marie scarcely took any part in the fighting, she was so bombarded on all sides that she could find few opportunities for exchanges. I was pleased, however, that I succeeded in getting a rose from her. The Princess never stayed very long at the Battle of Flowers. Being a constant centre of hostilities, she was bombarded to such an extent that probably she did not find it very amusing.

As the dinner-hour drew near the carriages began to wend their way homewards. Some very enthusiastic fighters kept it up for an hour or so longer, ending up the day with a final drive through the

town, where they were gaily acclaimed from the crowded balconies, and attempts were made on both sides to carry on the fight. However, little by little the streets became quieter, and nothing remained of the Battle of Flowers but the poor faded blooms dropped from the carriages, and the very substantial profits for the benefit of "La Crèche."

Roumanians of both sexes are devotees of the card-table, and all sorts of games are played—bridge, tarok, mouse, and poker are the most popular, but the last named seems to be the favourite. Cards are played not only in Bucarest but also in the provinces, and women, old and young, take an enormous amount of interest in the pastime. Card-playing seems to be a mania with them. They sit down to the tables in the early afternoon and continue playing till far into the night. Of course it must be conceded that life in the provinces is deadly dull. In summer it is pleasant enough when there are garden-parties, tennis-matches, and concerts; but in winter there is absolutely no amusement, so that card-playing is the only resource.

No evening party can ever be successful without the inevitable card-table, and very great sums are lost and won during the evening; sums that very often the persons concerned can ill afford to lose.

As I have mentioned elsewhere, most of the rivers in Roumania are very shallow, but the river Bistritza is certainly an exception. This great stream flows through part of Moldavia, and is very much used in the transit of timber from the mountainous regions higher up. The timber is floated down on huge rafts, and a great amusement during the summer months is to hire such a raft (it can be had for

twenty francs) and make the excursion down the river.

The raft is composed of numbers of stout logs firmly lashed together, and is about 12 feet long by 6 wide. The passengers sit in as comfortable a position as they can adopt, and as there is nothing whatever to take hold of, great care must be exercised to keep it well in mid-stream so that no collision may take place. The current is very swift, therefore the task of the men steering the raft is not always an easy one. There are always numerous rafts on the river, some with passengers, and some without, so the scene is very animated and interesting as one drifts along through some of the loveliest river scenery in Roumania.

The river runs swirling and seething in a succession of slight rapids. The mountains, wooded down to the water's edge, leave in places just a narrow gorge where only one raft can pass at a time. There are numerous turns and twists in the river, and when it is swollen by the waters of the Bicassu, as is often the case, the rapids appear like a boiling sea, the little waves foaming and hissing round the points of rock. It needs skilful paddling on the part of the raftsman to avoid these miniature "Iron Gates," and very often disaster overtakes the smaller rafts; they get stranded and more or less knocked about by the seething waters if they are in the hands of an unskilful raftsman.

When night falls a mooring-place must be found for the raft, and a shelter for the passengers, and herein lies one of the disadvantages of such an excursion. The small inns that are to be met with in this part of the country are very primitive and

the accommodation very scanty. Such as it is, however, one must make the best of it, as the only alternative is to spend the night on the raft.

If the weather conditions be favourable this trip on the Bistritza can be made most enjoyable, and most visitors to the country will have delightful recollections of the smooth, swift motion down the river, with the brown waters swirling and eddying round the raft, the sun-flecked boughs now near now far away as the raft approaches or recedes from the bank.

CHAPTER XIII

The blessing of the waters: a picturesque ceremony—Diving for the cross—Baptising the Jew—The child rain-makers; a charming custom—How I watered the human plants—The peasants celebrate the sowing of the seed.

IN the month of January a very curious ceremony takes place, the blessing of the waters—that is, of all the rivers of Roumania. A similar ceremony is performed in Russia, so it probably owes its origin to the Greek Church.

A very smart pavilion, decorated with a profusion of gay flags, is erected for the occasion on the bank of the Dimbovitza, the river on which Bucarest is built.

On the morning of the appointed day, crowds throng the streets dressed in their best, expectancy depicted on every face. Roumanians love shows of every kind and would not miss one for anything. The crowd becomes denser as one approaches the pavilion, and it is with difficulty that the soldiers manage to keep a passage clear for the arrival of the royal family.

The approach of the King is announced by a fanfare of trumpets, and as the Court carriage dashes up to the entrance of the pavilion every neck is craned to catch a glimpse of his Majesty, who is accompanied by his suite, and sometimes by other members of the royal family.

After the reception of the King by the Metropolitan, the religious service begins with the intoning of the prayers. These can only be heard by those in the near vicinity, but the singing by the choir is audible for a long distance in the clear frosty air. When a certain stage of the proceedings is reached, the Metropolitan invokes the blessing on the waters of Roumania, at the same time casting a large wooden cross into the river. This is the cue for what is the great event of the day for many people. Large numbers of men and boys who have been waiting in eager anticipation instantly dive after the cross (the river is not very deep at this point), and the lucky person who succeeds in gaining possession of it and bringing it ashore is rewarded by the King with a hundred-franc note (£4). The spectacle of the poor wretch emerging shivering from the icy water makes one feel, especially when the snow is on the ground and a keen wind blowing, that he has well earned the money.

Woe to the unlucky Jew who ventures to linger in the neighbourhood of the Dimbovitza on this particular morning. Should he be remarked by the crowd the chances are that he too will be sent to seek the cross in the waters of the river. This "baptising of the Jew" is a time-honoured ceremony.

A very curious custom is observed when, as is frequently the case in summer, rain is badly needed. A band of children go into the woods and array themselves from head to foot in verdure. Chains and garlands of green are wound around their bodies. Crowns and wreaths of foliage, quaintly and artistically conceived, surround their heads.

Even bunches of grass are disposed about them. Save their little brown faces, nothing which is not verdant can be seen.

When they come rushing into your courtyard it is as though a little Birnam Wood were bent on coming to Dunsinane. However, they soon prove to have peaceful business on hand, for they form up in the courtyard and perform a singularly weird and impressive dance. When this is ended your turn comes, for you must go amongst them armed with watering pots, and even jugs of water, and liberally besprinkle the little rain-makers. I was reluctant at first to wet the children, but they appeared to enjoy it so much, shaking themselves delightedly when a deluge more copious than usual descended upon them, that I soon forgot my scruples and plied my watering pot with enthusiasm. Then the little moving bundles of green scrambled for a few handfuls of *bani*, and ran off to the next house to repeat their performance. Had we failed to water them well their mission as rain-makers would have been less likely to prove successful.

On a day in early spring the peasants of the surrounding country make high holiday in honour of the sowing of the seed. The form the celebration takes is a visit to the capital, which, indeed, seems to be practically given over to them for the day. From early morn the holiday-makers stream into the city, their teams of oxen and their waggons profusely decorated with gay flowers and green branches, affording a pretty spectacle. The peasant himself is in gala attire, and never forgets to have a flower behind his ear, as he may meet in the town

a damsel comelier than those he left behind in the country.

The rustic visitors promenade the principal streets with their teams amidst much noise and laughter and the incessant cracking of whips. They are always pleased to accept any small gift offered to them, and it must be said of them that the festivity is never marred by drunkenness or license. After a modest glass of *ţuica* they wend their way homewards, reckoning up the profits of the day and anxious to relate to those who have remained at home the story of their adventures.

CHAPTER XIV

Festivals—A cruel christening—Marriage-making—The fiancé a bore—The bride's moral references—Anonymous letters—The bridal dress—The marriage ceremony—A floral departure—Hired jewellery as wedding presents—Child brides—Tempted to the altar with a doll!

FESTIVALS are numerous, and are conducted on a very lavish scale. Baptisms, marriages, and "names-days" are usually made the occasion of great feasting. Birthdays are not celebrated, but "names-days" are; that is, one keeps high holiday on the saint's day after whom one is named, as St Marie, St Anna, St John, etc.

A Roumanian baptism is a very curious ceremony. Many guests are invited, but the father and mother of the child are never allowed to be present. After prayers have been recited by the priest, a large font, almost full of luke-warm water, is brought in. Into this the child is plunged three times, the mouth, nose, and eyes being kept closely shut by the fingers of the priest. The poor little mite comes up gasping, and when it has regained its breath after the third dip, there is generally an outburst of crying. More prayers are then intoned, and the priest proceeds to touch the forehead, lips, hands, and feet of the child with holy oil, so that it may think no evil, speak no evil, do no evil, nor go where evil is done. The priest interrupts this ceremony several times, in

order to spit once before him, once behind, and then at each side. This is to keep off the devil with all his evil ways. I was present at a baptism once, but never again. I thought it terribly cruel for the poor little mite, and no longer wondered that the absence of the parents should be insisted on.

Marriages are generally arranged through the mediation of a third person. Mme. A., for example, has a son whom she would like to see settled in a home of his own with a wife who can furnish the house, pay off his debts, and generally make him comfortable. She looks round her circle of acquaintances, makes inquiries further afield, and when she hears of a suitable match, begs one of her friends to act as intermediary.

If the negotiations go on smoothly, and the "dot" (the principal point) is considered satisfactory, the engagement is celebrated immediately. Invitations are issued, bon-bons, champagne, etc., ordered from Capsa, the "lautari" (Roumanian musicians) are engaged, and when the happy occasion arrives, dancing is kept up till a very late hour. In the course of the evening dancing stops for a short time, everyone crowds into the largest drawing-room, where the engaged couple are found standing side by side. The oldest friend of the family makes a short speech, wishing all happiness and prosperity to the young people, who then exchange rings. These rings are worn till the wedding-day, when they are once more exchanged and the bride comes into her own.

After the engagement, the bridegroom comes to dinner every evening to make the acquaintance of the bride, as probably he has never set eyes on her

before. The engagement rarely lasts longer than two or three weeks, for, as a prospective mother-in-law once remarked to me, "long engagements are impossible in our country. It is tedious enough for us having this man come to dinner every evening for a week or two."

When the approaching marriage of a young couple is announced, the authorities send round forms to three householders in the neighbourhood of the bride's residence which they are requested to fill up and return. The questions are relative to the moral character of the bride. When I first heard of this extraordinary procedure, I did not believe the truth of the story, but later on I was shown one of these amazing documents. Another very unpleasant feature of engagements is the constant reception by both bride and groom of anonymous letters containing all sorts of allegations and suggestions concerning the character of the prospective partner. These letters continue to arrive till the day on which the wedding takes place.

A Roumanian bride's dress does not differ very much from that of her western sister, with the exception of the veil. Instead of a veil, as we understand it, a quantity of gold thread is worn, falling from the head to the edge of the dress. It has a very beautiful effect. In very grand weddings this thread is of real gold and costs a great deal of money. In weddings of a simple character, the thread is not gold, and is usually hired for the occasion.

The civil ceremony required by law takes place one day, the religious marriage on the day following. The latter usually takes place in the

evening, and the gay toilets of the guests, the gala-robes of the priests, and the innumerable wax candles which light up the scene, make a striking and beautiful picture. The bridesmaids assemble in the church to await the bride, who is then immediately led up to the "ikons," *i.e.* holy pictures, in order to kiss them. She then takes her stand together with the bridegroom and his near relatives at a small table, and the service begins.

Light metal crowns are placed on the heads of the bride and groom (it is rather ludicrous in the case of the latter, especially if he happens to be bald), and the intoning of the prayers continues, to the accompaniment of a shower of flowers which descend from the galleries on all the participants in the ceremony.

The rings are next exchanged, and afterwards the "holy dance" takes place. Bride and groom, near relatives, and priests, all join hands and solemnly make a circuit of the table three times. It is rather a risky proceeding for the bridegroom, as his crown is so liable to fall off. The bride is safe, as hers is fastened with hairpins.

A procession of carriages is formed for the homeward journey. These carriages are generally decorated with flowers, and large lighted candles are carried by the footman on the box.

In olden times the girls in Roumania were sought in marriage at a very early age. It was not considered at all extraordinary for girls of fifteen or even younger to get married.

A young Roumanian lady told me that her own grandmother was only thirteen years of age when she married. The proposal of marriage was laid

before her, and she, being only a child, thought how fine it would be to have nice new dresses and be able to buy anything she fancied, therefore she readily agreed.

When the wedding-day arrived, however, the child was not in the same mood, and nothing would induce her to go to church. Persuasion, promises, threats, all were unavailing. The bridegroom elect and the relatives were at their wits' end; everything was prepared, the visitors assembled, the priests already waiting at the church to perform the ceremony. What was to be done? Suddenly the bridegroom elect had an inspiration. Throwing himself into the waiting carriage, he dashed off at full speed, returning in a short time with the most beautiful doll that could be bought in Bucarest. The joy of the child was unbounded, and when the doll was placed in her arms she readily consented to go to church and get married. In spite of her fit of objection on the day of her nuptials, she was, I have been assured, very happy in her married life. To the day of her death, however, she never called her husband anything but "Domnele," *i.e.* Master. He was considerably older than she, hence, I suppose, her great respect for him.

CHAPTER XV

Pretty Roumanian women—Adventitious aids to beauty—Paris toilets—Childish extravagances—Men with London tailors—A dandy in blue boots—Some quaint superstitions—Warding off the evil eye—The efficacy of hot coals and a cup of water——The Marțisoara, or March token—A wife's indiscretion punished: a story of poetic justice—The Marțisoara as a temperamental barometer.

ROUMANIAN ladies are on the whole pretty, and some are *very* pretty. They have always good hair and teeth and small feet. Their figures are very good, and if one *should* happen to have a bad one, it is easily set right by the *corsetière*. The only thing that is not quite up to the mark is the complexion, and this is the reason why there is such a brisk demand for powder and paint. Dyeing the hair is also greatly in vogue, even with young people, and it is very amusing to note the change in a person's appearance when such dyes have first been used.

I knew two sisters, daughters of Princess —— (who always insisted upon her title) who were very pretty girls with dark brown hair. Evidently they were discontented with it, as on meeting them one day I noticed, to my utter amazement, that their hair was golden. I was so taken aback that I could not at once congratulate them on their appearance, although they evidently expected me to do so. On

seeing my confusion they were at great pains to explain that their hair was *not* dyed; they had only used oxygen on it. As the result was the same, however, it did not seem to me to matter what they called the process.

Roumanians know how to dress, the ladies especially, and as every article of the toilet comes from Paris, their taste is sure to be guided aright. They do not mind what they spend on dress, the simplest walking costume in pre-war times costing £8, 10s., simple hats anything from £4 upwards, so one may imagine how much may be spent on more elaborate toilets. These prices are not by any means confined to the wealthiest classes of society—even moderately well-to-do people will spend enormous sums on clothes. They seemed to me like overgrown children in many cases; as long as they had money to spend, it had to be spent.

I particularly remember a case in point. A young man of Bucarest inherited a considerable sum of money. At once he invested in a smart carriage and a really fine pair of horses. He was seen driving in great style to the Chaussée every afternoon, and I was told that it was a sight to see his dressing room hung round with suits of clothes of every prevailing fashion, and under each suit a pair of boots or shoes ready to hand.

This joyous life went on for a time, till the money began to get scarce (as it has an awkward habit of doing), and the young man had to sell his carriage and fine horses. He was then seen taking his daily airing in a *birja*, *i.e.* hired carriage (no Roumanian walks unless he is absolutely obliged), and after some months of that he was reduced to riding in the

tram! His fall was gradual, but the lowest depth was reached at last.

The men of Roumania are not good-looking as a rule. They are generally short in stature with very dark complexions and conspicuously moustached. Moustaches used to be worn with turned-up ends in imitation of the Kaiser, but as he is no longer looked on with any favour this fashion has been abandoned. The men who are rich enough to do so, order their clothes in London, or in Paris. As a rule only those who really cannot afford to do otherwise get their clothes in their own country.

The boots that one buys in Roumania are usually of a very light make, both for winter and summer. Ladies wear black, brown, or grey, but I have never seen them with other colours, as I have seen men. My astonishment was great one day when I met a man wearing a pair of light blue boots. One never requires strong boots in Roumania, as in winter snow-boots are worn over the others, and removed on entering the house. Boots were always expensive in Bucarest, a decent pair costing from 25 francs (£1) upwards; but really smart people paid 75 and 80 francs a pair.

Ladies practically always have their corsets, boots, and gloves made for them. It is very seldom indeed that they buy any of those articles ready made.

We must always remember, in considering the Roumanian people, that their civilisation is far more suggestive of the East than of the West. In our eyes some of their customs are very peculiar, to say the least of it. Even the upper classes are extremely superstitious.

No one ever dreams of starting on a journey or commencing any particular work on a Tuesday. It is considered a very unlucky day.

Dreams are gravely related and certain conclusions are drawn from them, based, of course, on past experience, either of the raconteur or of some friend.

Little children wear coloured ribbons in order to keep off the " evil eye." A boy wears red and a little girl blue. It is rather a convenient custom, as one knows at once the sex of the child, and is not under the necessity of alluding to an infant as " it."

On no account must one admire or praise a child in the hearing of its parents. Such a proceeding is looked upon as directly challenging the operations of the " evil eye." I shall never forget an incident which occurred some years ago. I had called upon Madame ——, and we were quietly drinking tea together in the English manner, a compliment to me, when her husband rushed in with their little boy, in a state of the greatest excitement. He explained that they had been walking on the Calea Victorie when they met a mutual friend of ours, an Englishman, who had not been long in Bucarest. This gentleman had unluckily expressed his admiration of the handsome boy ; hence the trouble. M. —— rang the bell violently and gave an order to the servant, who without delay brought in a cup of cold water on a tray, whilst she carried in the other hand a small shovel containing three live coals from the kitchen fire. With great anxiety and solicitude, the perturbed father dropped the three pieces of charcoal into the cup. They sizzled a little and—floated. Had they sunk the direst mis-

fortunes would have been presaged. A teaspoonful of the water was then given to the child, his forehead, the palms of his hands, and the soles of his feet were moistened with it, and three paternosters having been said, all was well. The relieved father turned to me with many apologies for his excited entrance, "But you know," he explained, "the matter was of the very greatest importance, and he is our only child."

It is the universal feminine custom in Roumania to wear a "Marţisoara" during the month of March. This is an ornament primarily intended for young girls, and all kinds of them are worn, from simple ones of glass or painted wood to costly trinkets of silver or gold ornamented with precious stones. They are therefore of all prices. But whatever the cost may be, the practice of tying each one with fancy cord, coloured red and white, is universal, these two colours being symbolical of the ideal complexion of a young girl. The ornaments are usually worn tied round the wrist, with the red and white tassels bobbing about with every movement. At the end of March the Marţisoara is taken off, the ornament carefully preserved, and the cords hung out on a bush in order that the dew of heaven may besprinkle them. The idea is that the Marţisoara will be efficacious in giving the wearer cheeks of the much coveted colouring.

The custom of presenting Marţisoara in the month of March is so universal, that not only do the youthful members of the male community take advantage of it in presenting to an admired fair one a gift that at any other time might be deemed

an impertinence, but also older men frequently make use of the occasion to give presents in quarters where they have no right to bestow them. An amusing instance of the latter kind of indiscretion occurred in Bucarest some years ago, and became very literally the talk of the town.

Madame M., a well-known society beauty, had a husband who was neither rich nor generous. A Marţisoara displayed in the window of Resch the jeweller attracted her attention and she ardently desired to possess it. It was a beautifully fashioned trinket of gold, studded with lovely sapphires. Madame M. pointed it out to her husband, who, however, absolutely refused to even inquire the price, as it was sure to be very great. Now the lady had a *bon ami*, a very wealthy man, and when he heard of the difficulty he begged her to accept the Marţisoara as a gift from him. She declared that this would be impossible, as her husband's suspicions would at once be aroused. The pair, however, had a little talk over the matter and hit upon a very ingenious plan.

M. Bon Ami called upon Resch and made a certain arrangement with him. The price of the ornament was 2000 francs, so he paid half of that sum to Resch on the understanding that if M. M. called to inquire about it he should let him have it for 1000 francs. Armed with this knowledge, Madame M. returned to the charge, and at length induced her husband to promise that if the Marţisoara could be obtained for 1200 francs he would buy it. The good man was a fair judge of precious stones, and thought it was safe to make the offer, as it would never be considered. The negotiation must have been an

interesting one. It was said that Resch acted very discreetly, and after naming a price which was calculated not to arouse suspicion, he suffered himself to be beaten down to 1000 francs.

There was no more triumphant man in Bucarest that March afternoon than M. M. On his way home to delight his wife he could not refrain from dropping in at the Club to brag about his cleverness. He had half a dozen men for an audience, and they were not a bit bored, for this was a genuine and surprising bargain. All admired the Marţisoara tremendously. Several very much wanted to obtain possession of it, and it was here that the complications started. M. M. at first kept his wife, and the great pleasure he was in a position to afford her, before his mind, but when one of the party offered him 500 francs in advance of the purchase money, his cupidity was aroused and the Marţisoara changed hands.

M. M., however, proceeded homeward without misgivings. His wife was a sensible woman, and a clear gain of 500 francs would surely console her for any little disappointment about the trinket. He told his wonderful story with glee, and madame promptly went into hysterics. The poor husband could only ring the bell, and, whilst restoratives were being applied, reflect helplessly that there is no possibility of understanding the ways of woman.

If anyone feels curious as to how the story gained publicity, I can only say that my long residence in the country taught me, among other things, that there are no secrets in Bucarest.

There is another custom connected with the first nine days in the month of March. Every young

girl chooses one of these days as her special day, and whatever the weather may be on that day, it is supposed to show her character—rainy weather shows that she is inclined to weep very readily; dull weather, that she looks at the gloomy side; alternate sunshine and rain, that she is changeable, and so forth. These nine days are called "Alte Baba" (old women), while the nine following are reserved for the men-folk under the same conditions. It used to be quite exciting to watch the weather conditions on special days, and very amusing when they tallied (as was often the case) with the character of a person who had chosen them.

CHAPTER XVI

English nurses introduce the bath-tub—Matutinal ablutions in a country house—Abstinence from ablutions a proof of holiness —The funeral of a Metropolitan: dead prelate in the procession —Afternoon tea's equivalent in a tomb.

IT is a very pretty sight to see a Roumanian baby of the élite start for his daily airing. He is of course most beautifully dressed, although the little face often looks very pinched and yellow in the midst of all the finery. The nurse who wheels the perambulator is usually in costume, consisting of a long cloak with a hood, a head-dress made entirely of ribbon, with long streamers a quarter of a yard in width hanging down behind. If her charge be a boy, the nurse wears red; if a girl, blue.

It is very rare indeed for a Roumanian lady to nurse her own child. A wet nurse is always engaged, who has the entire charge of the little one till it is weaned. It caused quite a sensation when the present Queen of Roumania proposed to nurse one of her children.

Children are not often troubled with baths; the washing of the hands and face and an occasional rubbing with vinegar over the whole body being considered quite sufficient.

Of late years, many families have engaged English nurses, and although at first the innovation of open windows and plenty of cold water was

regarded with fear and trembling, people now seem to be growing accustomed to it.

Washing was never greatly in favour, even with grown-ups, and there are difficulties in the way of a successful toilet, especially when one pays a visit to the country.

On entering the bedroom, you wonder where you can perform your ablutions, as no washing stand is to be seen, but next morning the mystery is solved. About eight o'clock a knock is heard at the door, and a maid enters with a wash-basin and a small jug of water. The basin being placed on a chair, you are instructed to hold out your hands, into which the maid gravely pours some water. If you are clever enough to catch some of it, you give a kind of wash to your face, then you hold out your hands for a fresh supply for the hands themselves. This done, the maid gathers up her appliances, takes her leave, and you hear her knocking at the next door to repeat the performance.

I was paying a visit to the country some years ago, and my hostess announced one morning, with every indication of grief, that the Bishop had just died. "Oh, he was such a holy man," she said; and she so insisted on his holiness, that at length I was driven to inquire what proofs she had of it. "Oh," she replied, "we *know* he was a holy man; just fancy, he never washed since he was appointed Bishop ten years ago!"

Immunity from washing is not the only advantage over ordinary mortals which the higher clergy possess. The Metropolitan, for example, is never buried. His body after death is placed on a sort of throne and lowered into the crypt of the monastery.

After some months have passed, the dead prelate, throne and all, is built into a wall.

I have a vivid recollection of the funeral of an Archbishop which I attended. Indeed, I cannot conceive of anybody ever forgetting such an experience. The ceremony was of a most imposing character. Enormous crowds gathered to witness the passing of the procession through the streets. A detachment of cavalry headed the procession, and was followed by infantry accompanied by a band. Next came the bier. This was a sort of platform drawn by six horses. The platform was completely covered with flowers, and in the centre, arrayed in ceremonial robes and mitre, sat the dead Metropolitan. The body was supported on each side by an attendant, but in spite of their care the dead head with its ghastly face waggled horribly. I felt terrified lest the body should topple over altogether.

Behind the bier came officials of the Court, ministers, deputies, etc. Then more soldiers and police. But for me the procession contained only one figure, and that was the dead man sitting in his chair.

Until a quite recent date, it was the custom to carry open coffins, with the face of the dead exposed, in funeral processions.

As a rule, when a person is at the point of death, a candle is placed in each hand, in order, it is said, to light the spirit into the next world.

A terrible accident was once caused by this practice. A widow lady living in the Calea Victoire was lying dangerously ill; the doctors had given her up. The servants by whom she was attended, thinking her last hour had come, placed, as was the custom,

a candle in each hand, and then left the house (the sick are generally left to die alone, even by their nearest and dearest, Roumanians having such a dread of witnessing death). The candles unhappily fell from the poor nerveless hands and set fire to the bed-clothes, the flames rapidly spreading, as no check was placed upon them, till, when help from outside finally arrived, the whole room and all its contents were entirely consumed. It was dreadful for me to view even the outside of the ruined house and to think what scenes may have occurred within. For long after I was haunted by the idea that the poor lady might have recovered if she had been well attended and not left alone as she was.

The regulations with regard to deaths which may call for an inquiry offer an extraordinary example of red tape. Should a person fall dead in the street, the body may on no account be touched until full reports have been made to a variety of functionaries and a great number of forms have been signed. The tedious proceedings may occupy the whole day. I have seen more than once a corpse lying for many hours in the middle of a busy thoroughfare, necessitating a diversion of the traffic. On one occasion the relatives had placed candles round the body. It was a strange street spectacle.

This is not a cheerful subject, but before leaving it I must refer to some curious tombs in the cemetery just outside Bucarest.

The most interesting is that of a young girl who died some years ago. Her body has never been buried in the strict sense of the term, but remains in a large vault which is always open. This vault, to which one descends by six or seven marble steps, is

furnished as a reception room. The girl had some reputation as a poetess, and her favourite books are placed upon shelves on the wall. Amongst other things in the room, or vault, is a large globe which she used in her geographical studies. The hands of the clock on the wall point to the hour at which she died. Behind a curtain the coffin rests upon a marble stand. A lamp placed before it is always alight. The bereaved father spends hours at a time in the vault. He declares that he has constant communication with his daughter's spirit.

On the anniversary of her " names-day," relatives and friends are bidden to the vault, where they are entertained with black coffee and dulceata.

Another curious monument is the lifesize effigy of a lady whose body lies beneath. The figure stands on a flat tombstone and holds a fan in its hands. A fan does seem an incongruity in a graveyard. Attached to nearly every tombstone is the photograph of the person who rests beneath.

CHAPTER XVII

The servant question not so acute as in England—Establishments of thirty servants—Five or six for professional people—Terms and duties of service—An unwilling bather—A highly recommended maid who waited at table barefooted—The reference books of servants—The servants' quarters—A strange privilege: female servants may have their husbands or putative husbands and their families to live with them—Costly marriage fees are prohibitive—"Madam" and "Madame"—Linguistic pitfalls: a "master" or a "cake"?—When a bald-headed cook is wanted—Leaving cards on names-days—An omnibus round.

THE servant question is not nearly so acute in Roumania as it is in England. Servants, of a kind, are always to be had, though really good ones are rare. It is generally acknowledged that Hungarians are much better workers than Roumanians, but in late years the Hungarian nation became jealous of the constant migration to the adjoining country (where better wages obtained) and absolutely forbade it.

Probably owing to the fact that the abolition of slavery only dates back some seventy years or thereabouts, Roumanian families require the services of a great number of servants. Prince G., for instance, had thirty servants in his establishment, although his house was of a very moderate size, not by any means what one would describe as "princely." People lower down in the social scale, such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc., generally have establishments of five or six servants. The conditions of

service are not at all similar to those prevailing in England. A maid is engaged at a fixed wage of from thirty francs monthly upwards, and her dinner. In addition she receives thirty *bani* (3d.) a day, which is called bread-money, and with this she is supposed to provide herself with bread, tea or coffee, sugar, and anything she may require for extra meals. Any scraps or broken bread left over from the table the servants are at liberty to take. As there are generally a number of them clubbing their resources, they can feed themselves very well indeed on these terms. The servants are required to rise very early, at five o'clock generally, and to sweep and dust thoroughly all the rooms that have been occupied the day before. As the floors are of parquetry in most houses, and the carpets laid loosely over them, the work is not so very difficult. Nearly every family has a "randasch," a man-servant who does the heavy work, beating carpets, cleaning windows, and such like. Sometimes the randasch waits at table, but more often it is a parlour-maid. It depends on the capabilities of the man, whether he is intelligent or not.

I once visited at a house and noticed that the randasch was a newcomer. Having remarked upon it, I was informed that he had only come for a short time, as in some weeks he was to become a " popa," *i.e.* priest !

A few minutes before lunch or dinner is served a maid enters the salon bearing a tray on which are several small glasses of *ţuica* and a plate with tiny bits of bread, which she presents in turn to each visitor. *Ţuica* (pronounced *zweeka*) is a liqueur made from plums, and is supposed to act as

a stimulant to the appetite. After dinner, when the guests return to the salon, the maid appears once more with small cups of Turkish coffee. This coffee is delicious, and is made exactly as one gets it in the bazaars in Constantinople.

Servants dress much better of late years; in some houses you may even meet maids with caps and aprons, but it is by no means general. When I first went to Roumania I was amazed to see the door of a quite imposing mansion opened by a creature of rather dirty appearance with a shawl over her head. Some ladies are lax and do not insist on either cleanliness or tidiness in their maids.

A Swiss lady of my acquaintance in Bucarest had great trouble once with a Roumanian maid whom she had engaged. The rule of this house was that each maid was to take a bath every week, but the difficulty was to enforce the rule in the case of this particular girl. She got out of it when she could, and when brought to book almost cried and said she had never been asked to do such a thing in any other house. Finally the mistress insisted upon the maid entering the bathroom, she herself remaining outside the door until the necessary but much dreaded ablutions had been performed.

I remember once a new maid being engaged at a house where I was staying. She said she had been some time with Mme. B. and Mme. N., well-known ladies in Bucarest society, and so it was taken for granted that if she had been in such good houses she would prove a first-class servant. But what was our astonishment, the first time she came to wait at table, to see her enter the dining-room with bare feet! At first we looked at each other in amaze-

ment, then the comical side of the situation struck us, and we laughed and laughed till we cried. We did enjoy our dinner that night, but we were not waited on by Mme. B.'s late maid-servant.

Servants are not required to have written references, but they are furnished by the police authorities with small books in which all particulars regarding themselves are recorded, and they are required to produce these on taking service anew. These records are always a hold upon them. Should they have a fancy to go off without permission or to take with them any property not lawfully theirs, they can easily be traced by means of these small books, duplicates of which remain in the possession of the police.

In very many houses the servants' quarters are quite apart from the house. Sometimes a small house in the courtyard is provided for them; but even if they do live in the same house as the family, they occupy rooms which can be cut off from the rest of the dwelling by merely locking the door of communication. This indeed is very often done at night.

Roumanian mistresses never have the trouble of providing beds for their servants, as everyone arrives with her own. Bedsteads are provided, but nothing else. Bed and bedding form, of course, an indispensable part of the equipment of female servants, and some of them take pride in having a good show of pillows with the pillow-cases richly ornamented with crochet work. But with men-servants it is very different indeed; it very often happens that they have no beds at all! I heard once of a young fellow being brought fresh from the

country to act as "randasch." On the mistress being questioned by one of her friends as to where he would sleep, she replied, "Oh, anywhere at all; he does not need a bed." Further investigation showed that he simply lay down on his own little trunk, and slept there quite well too.

Servants are permitted to have their husbands with them. They may be husbands only in name, and indeed very often are, but still no objection is made about giving them house-room. If the man has any occupation, he is away all day, only coming back at night, when his wife will have a meal ready for him, which is supposed to be provided by herself. Very often, therefore, there is quite a small colony housed together in the servants' quarters, each one with her small family round her. It is very probable that this custom dates back to the time when serfdom was still in vogue in the country. I believe that when serfdom was finally abolished the step did not please many of the serfs themselves. They and their families had lived on the estates of their masters, fed, clothed, and housed, not badly treated and not overworked; and when they received their freedom (the want of which they had never felt) and were obliged in many cases to look out for work in order to keep wife and family, they found their new responsibilities very strange and did not relish them at all. Their sole disability as serfs, and one which I think we may imagine did not trouble them much, was that they were debarred from having their hair cut!

I have said that very often the marriage ceremony is dispensed with by the servant class, but this is not so much their fault as that of the authorities.

Marriage fees are very high in Roumania; not only those given to priests, but also the fees required by the civil authorities. A man, let us say, from the country wishes to marry in town. He must write to his own village and get the certificate of his birth as well as the written consent of his parents, or, failing these, the consent of his grandparents. Even if a man is fifty years of age he is obliged to ask the consent of his parents if he has any. Should the parents not agree to the match, then he makes three "sommations." That is, he is required by law to send three notices with a certain interval of time between them to his parents, informing them, first, of his intended marriage, and then of his intention to persist in the determination. After the third notice has been sent he is free to marry.

When the different certificates and written consent have finally been procured, they must be deposited at the town hall and stamped. The stamping and fees amount to a considerable sum, so one cannot wonder that a poor couple should prefer to keep the few francs they possess and dispense with the marriage tie.

A German maid in a house where I was staying once told me a pitiful tale. She had come to Roumania as a quite young girl. After some time she made the acquaintance of a Roumanian, with whom she fell in love. As he was not in a very good position they dispensed with the marriage ceremony and lived together as man and wife. A young family grew up around them, and their circumstances caused the utmost grief to the girl's poor old mother in Germany, who felt keenly her daughter's disgrace. From her poor resources she contrived to

send 200 marks to enable the couple to get married. Alas ! the sum was soon swallowed up in the cost of stamping, translating, etc., of various necessary or unnecessary papers, and the object remained unachieved. To the great grief of the poor old mother in her far-off village home, the situation of her daughter remained as it was, with no hope of any change, for whatever money the couple could hope to make would have to be used for the needs of their young family.

Good cooks are pretty well paid, receiving 50, 60, up to 100 francs monthly, but they have also a fair amount of work to do. Sugar in Roumania is bought by the loaf, and amongst her multitudinous duties the cook must see that it is cut into small pieces. She must roast and grind the coffee daily. Above all, she must go in good time to market (some go before 5 a.m.), otherwise the best of the country produce will have gone.

Servants are very respectful to each other, never using each other's name without prefacing it with "Madam." "Madam Anna has gone to market." "Madam Marie is busy washing just now." It is very curious that this title of "Madam," as distinct from "Madame," is almost entirely confined to the servant class. "Cocanitza" or "Cocoiana," the Roumanian term for "mistress," is only given to the lady of the house. The words "Coconash" (master) and "Cozonac" (a kind of cake), as it happens, resemble each other in the pronunciation. A friend of mine, an English lady, sent from time to time for this cake, as she liked it for tea, but could not understand why the servant seemed always so amused, till at last she found out that she had

ordered her to fetch a *Master* instead of a *cake*. Funny mistakes do occur when one does not know the language well, as was the case with another lady. She had a person to work by the day, who, on leaving, invariably said "Serat mana." The English lady thought this meant "Good evening," and very politely repeated it after her. But she was obliged to find a substitute for her response when she learned that the words meant "I kiss your hand."

I think I must find space for an example of what I understand has come to be known here as a "howler." It is really too good to be overlooked. I once gave a pupil a portion of the fourteenth chapter of St Mark to turn from French into English. In her translation I found this gem: "The ghost is agreeable, but the meat is feeble."

A cake that is very popular in Roumania is one made of alternate layers of dough and a mixture of apples, currants, and sugar. It must be made in a very cool place, and one requires a large table for the task. When the dough is ready, it is rolled out very thin, then placed on the table and drawn out over it at every side till it is scarcely thicker than paper. The mixture of apples, currants, raisins, sugar, and spice stands ready, and a portion is spread over the paste, which is then doubled over and another layer of the mixture spread upon it. The process is repeated till the paste has assumed the form of a great sausage nearly a yard in length. It is then bent in the shape of a horse-shoe, put into the oven and baked. When it is cooked, no better cake could be desired. When I first became acquainted with this delicacy, I was rather curious

as to how it was made. I was informed that the cake could only be made by a bald-headed cook, as he was obliged to put the paste on his head and draw it down and outwards in all directions in order to attain the requisite degree of thinness. Being at that time ripe for shocks, I suffered some qualms, but later realised that my Roumanian friends were not without a certain sense of humour.

One of the duties of a servant is to stand at the outer gate on his master's names-day, and receive the visitors' cards. It is very seldom that one receives on such occasions, and this is so well known that anyone can be sent just to drop a card at the house designated.

Cards of congratulation are sent in such numbers at New Year's Day, for instance, that it is often quite impossible to post a letter, the pillar-boxes are so packed. It did not astonish me very much to hear that one poor postman quite lost patience, and threw all the letters into the river instead of delivering them. On such great fête-days it is almost impossible to get a decent carriage; every one is engaged hours, perhaps days, before it is needed. Everybody makes holiday, and when cards have been left where they are due, then a turn at the Chaussée is indulged in, or there may be a marriage at which one must appear.

I remember a gentleman from the country coming to Bucarest on such a great holiday. As he was seldom in town he wished to take the opportunity of paying a few visits. Not a carriage was to be had, so at last in despair he hired an omnibus to take him round. Now, the humour of the situation would not be so apparent to an English

person. The Bucarest omnibus is not at all " chic." It is permissible to travel by the tram, but the omnibus is quite *infra dig.*; and so the spectacle of this gentleman, in kid gloves and tall hat, rattling up to the doors of various stately dwellings in the bumping vehicle was comical in the extreme, and caused much merriment.

CHAPTER XVIII

Convict life in the salt-mines—A Roumanian Jack Sheppard—The trick that laid him low—Procedure in murder cases—The reconstruction of the crime—Scant justice for servants : no Habeas Corpus Act in Roumania—A man whose face was the only evidence against him—Gipsies and the building trade : the men act as masons and bricklayers, the women as their labourers—Exhibition of new clothes when a roof is put on—Fiddling ragamuffins—Gipsies as musicians—Guarding against gipsies in the Carpathians.

PRISON accommodation in Roumania is considerably better now than it used to be. The cells are light and airy, and the prison fare is not worse than in other countries. Capital punishment is not inflicted. If a person be convicted of a capital crime, his sentence will be imprisonment in the salt-mines for life or for a long term of years. These salt-mines are situated at Ocna Mare, and it is quite an interesting experience to pay a visit to them. Before descending into the depths, visitors are required to don a large loose overall to protect their clothes. The descent in the cage is soon over, and one finds oneself in a large hall hewn out of the solid salt, which, when lighted up, flashes out brilliant colours innumerable. The prisoners make the descent every morning, and stay below for a certain number of hours for work, after which they are re-conducted to their prison home. They are allowed to manufacture small articles of salt, wood,

etc., and stalls are arranged in the courtyard of the prison on which these articles are exposed for sale, the prisoners themselves acting as salesmen.

For a nervous person it is not at all reassuring to find oneself suddenly in the midst of such surroundings. Some of the prisoners have a very dogged, obstinate expression; and when one remarks among the articles for sale numbers of large, strongly made knives, one involuntarily begins to wonder what would happen if the prisoners should each seize a knife and make a sudden dash for freedom. Should *we* be attacked, or should we not? Evidently such a supposition has occurred to no one else; or is it that such precautions have been taken that a rising on the part of the prisoners is out of the question?

Occasionally, however, a prisoner does effect his escape. Some years ago a noted robber who was undergoing a long term of punishment succeeded in getting out of prison. He was rearrested, and again this modern Jack Sheppard got the better of his captors, commencing a fresh villainous career, and it may be remarked that he did not stop at robberies by any means. The prison authorities became quite wearied out with this man, so devised a plan to get rid of him entirely. The last place at which he was arrested was Galatz, where there is a fairly large garden. On a certain day and at a certain hour the public were absolutely forbidden to enter this garden, a sentry being stationed at each gate to see that the order was obeyed. The prisoner was then taken under strong escort to be transferred to another place of detention, and the way led through the garden. The guards were chatting and laughing

together, so the prisoner thought it a favourable moment to elude them. He was a very agile man, and started off full speed, but had not got very far when three shots rang out and he was laid low, his inglorious career ended for ever. It seemed rather a mean trick; but as the death penalty is never inflicted, no other means of getting rid of him could be devised.

What always appeared very strange to me was the procedure in a murder case, but I believe it is similar to that adopted in France. If a person be arrested on a charge of murder, he undergoes a first examination, and is then taken to the scene of the murder. Everything is arranged as it is supposed to have been when the murder was committed. Even the body of the victim is present. It is presumed that revisiting the scene and recalling the terrible occurrence may betray the accused man into some expression of feeling or even into a confession of guilt. The whole idea is gruesome, and it seems to me to take an unfair advantage of the prisoner.

Principles of justice and fairplay are not quite so developed in the East as in the West. For instance, a servant who is accused of theft by his master or mistress gets a good thrashing first of all at the police-court in order to induce him to confess his guilt, and also to divulge where he has hidden the stolen property. It is against all law to act in such a way, but the servant does not dare complain.

It is not at all a difficult matter for a person who occupies a high position in the capital to have another of lesser degree, such as a servant or a workman, imprisoned. A word to the police, and

the victim will be arrested and kept perhaps for days without a charge being brought against him. But a complaint is never brought forward for false imprisonment, nor would such a complaint be considered. A lady of my acquaintance once engaged a man-servant of rather unprepossessing appearance. One night after retiring to rest she was awakened by suspicious noises in the house. She immediately conceived the idea that this man of evil looks was bent on actions to correspond. As she always kept a policeman's rattle near at hand, she at once rushed to the window and sounded it. In a few minutes two policemen arrived, and a house search was instituted. Nowhere could the man-servant be found, till finally the kitchen was reached, where he was discovered lying across the table fast asleep, or pretending to sleep, with a huge knife beside him. This looked so suspicious that he was immediately arrested and taken to the police-court. The lady was asked if she could accuse him of any wrong-doing, but as she really had nothing definite to formulate, only suspicions to go upon, no charge could be made against him. He was, however, detained for three or four days before being set at liberty.

In Roumania gipsies form an interesting section of the community; they are always employed where building is going on. The men are engaged as stone-masons and bricklayers, and execute the more skilled work, whilst the women act as labourers and mount the scaffolding with loads on their backs. At first it was never thought necessary to provide any kind of dwelling for these gipsies when engaged on a job—they just lay about anywhere in the open;

but finally it became quite a scandal and a source of danger to the community, so action had to be taken. A law was passed that anyone employing gipsies must provide them with proper accommodation, and that sanitary considerations must be respected.

When the building on which gipsies are employed arrives at a certain stage, sometimes before the roof is put on, high holiday is kept. The scaffolding is decorated with green boughs, among which one may see new skirts, coats, and blouses fluttering in the breeze. These are given by the employer, and are on view for the rest of the day. I think it is the only time they *are* on view, as I have never yet seen a gipsy with new clothes on. They would seem quite out of place. Rags and gipsies seem somehow to belong to each other. When no building is going on, gipsies are often to be seen parading the streets with a tame bear that can be put through any number of tricks. One of the gipsies has a weird kind of incantation to which the unfortunate bear is supposed to dance. His unwieldy movements, and muffled growling, as a sort of running accompaniment to the music, delight the children, who are eager to reward the bear's master with all the coppers they possess.

The gipsies do not seem to be a really lazy race. When they are at work they are quite active, singing or whistling if they have not at the moment the inevitable cigarette end between their teeth. It is one of the occupations of the gipsy children to roam about the streets in search of cigarette-ends that have been thrown away (pipes are seldom used in Bucarest). These are brought to their parents

to be smoked to the "bitter end." The women smoke just as much as the men. Another occupation for bigger children is to get hold of a rude kind of violin and to play for the public. It is a sight to see one trying to keep up with a tram, fiddling for all he is worth (no one knows what the tune is), but keeping a sharp look-out for any *bani* that may be thrown to him. He is a comical figure, sometimes wearing neither shoes nor stockings, but with a long coat reaching half-way down his bare legs. Sometimes he sports a battered-in hat, but more often than not his own shaggy curls form his only head covering.

The little children are picturesque, and they would delight the eye of an artist. They do not trouble about clothes at all. It is true that the little brown bodies are sometimes clothed in tiny shirts, but more often than not they are entirely naked. The big black eyes and the little brown faces crowned by masses of thick brown or black curls remind one strongly of the types in pictures by Murillo.

All gipsies have a natural talent for music, and where it can be developed success is almost sure. There is, for instance, a gipsy in Bucarest who, with his band of musicians, is very much sought after for entertainments. He can command 200–300 francs for a few hours in the evening; and as festivities are not often wanting, especially in winter, he must have amassed quite a nice little fortune. He went with his band to the Exhibition in Paris some years ago, and aroused great enthusiasm among the French by his playing. Gipsy music in Roumania has always a vein of melancholy running

through it, quite different from the Hungarian music, which is fiery and wild in its character, showing plainly the untamed spirit of the people.

Gipsies as a class have not a good reputation for honesty, therefore if any are seen near one's house a sharp look-out must be kept. I stayed for some weeks one summer at a little village in the Carpathians. Just about twenty minutes' walk from our cottage there was a gipsy encampment. The lady with whom I was staying was rather nervous, and terribly afraid of the gipsies. The forest, which was very dense, came right down to the back of our cottage, which was in a rather isolated situation. Her fear was that the gipsies might hide in the forest and then attack us at night. Great precautions had to be taken, doors and windows carefully closed and barred. The dogs, of which there are always enough and to spare in the country, were brought close up to the cottage, and with a loaded revolver near at hand we considered we should be a match for the gipsies. But the truth is they never came to let us prove it.

CHAPTER XIX

King Carol as a diplomat—Lichnowsky as a Secretary of Legation —The scandal about his chief's (Prince von Bülow) wife—I see something at Bad Hall—A great ladies' man: he goes too far at length and is "promoted" to another sphere—Kiderlein-Wächter, genial and popular — An unfortunate dinner-party over which his housekeeper presided—Prince Gulochowski and his wife—Some British ambassadors: Sir Frank Lascelles and Sir Charles (now Lord) Hardinge—How the latter rendered me a great service—Sir Henry Drummond Wolff—Sir John Kennedy and Lady Kennedy and their family—Better times for the British colony—The British colony—Its religious interests—Bishop Collins and his visits to Bucarest—His tragic end deeply regretted—Since the war Bucarest has many more British visitors—A British Chamber of Commerce, and a projected club.

THE late King Carol was considered one of the best diplomats in Europe. Was it because of this the German Embassy had always more secretaries on their staff than any other embassy? It was the case, at any rate.

Some twenty years ago the present Prince von Bülow was German Minister at the Court of Roumania. One of the secretaries was the young Prince Lichnowsky, who ended his career in London as German Ambassador at the outbreak of war.

Young Lichnowsky was considered to be very clever, in spite of his abnormally large head (his hats were always specially made for him); and for a German he was remarkably well groomed, but one did not wonder at that when one learned that he had all his clothes from Poole's.

There was a good deal of talk in Bucarest at that time concerning Lichnowsky's weakness for Mme. von Bülow, the wife of his chief. As the lady was considerably older than he, I never gave any credence to the reports, till some facts came under my own observation. I was staying for a few weeks at Bad Hall, a small village in Austria, rather celebrated for the health-giving properties of its springs. At the principal hotel Mme. von Bülow was staying, and in close attendance upon her no other than Prince Lichnowsky. He was most attentive, accompanying her to the Casino, to the springs, and always carrying a formidable array of wraps, as she was not a very robust woman. After seeing this, I could no longer disbelieve the stories that had been current.

Lichnowsky was considered a great ladies' man in Bucarest, and the most of his time was spent amongst the fair members of the local society. His attentions to a certain personage since dead became so marked, that it was deemed advisable to cut short his adventurous career, and so he was "promoted," and the society of Bucarest knew him no more.

Another diplomat was Kiderlein-Wächter, also German Minister during part of my stay in Bucarest. He was a genial man and very popular, but it must be confessed that he was anything but abstemious; he did not even confine himself to beer, as most Germans do.

His household was composed of three or four servants, a valet, and a lady housekeeper. In regard to the last-named he rather got into hot water with the Roumanian ladies. He issued

invitations for a dinner-party, and, when the guests arrived and dinner was announced, the head of the table was taken by the lady housekeeper! Indignation was general among the Roumanians, as, although they are not at all strict among their own set, they are very particular as to what they require from an outsider. The consequence was that Herr Kiderlein-Wächter could never again show hospitality to the Roumanian ladies, as in no case would it have been accepted. Poor man! he died a year or so ago at Stuttgart, very suddenly, I believe.

Prince Gulochowski was also in Bucarest some time before as Austrian Minister. I remember him as rather short, portly, and wearing bushy whiskers. His wife was just the contrary. She was thin to attenuation. Mme. Gulochowski was once present at the Elisabeth Ball, given at the Royal Theatre every year. It was the Queen's express desire that every lady should appear there dressed in Roumanian costume, as she wished to encourage the national industries.

One would have thought that Mme. Gulochowski would have eagerly seized upon the chance of covering up her thin shoulders, but not she. In spite of the well-known wish of the Queen, she appeared in ball costume, most conspicuous as the only lady present who was not dressed in national costume.

Of our own diplomats, not a few of our well-known men spent some time in Roumania.

Sir Frank Lascelles, a relative of the Earl of Harewood, was English Minister at Bucarest before being appointed to Teheran.

Our late Viceroy in India, Lord Hardinge, spent some time there also as chargé d'affaires. I always feel grateful to him for helping me out of a difficult position. I had been in Russia for some months and wished to return to Roumania, but no Russian préfet would sign my passport or give me permission to leave the country. Each one insisted that I must be provided with a new passport, as it was not admissible to leave the country with the same passport that I had on entering it. In my extremity I wrote to Bucarest, and the sympathy of Sir Charles Hardinge, as he then was, was enlisted on my behalf. He did his best for me, even interviewing M. de Fonton, the Russian Minister, with the result that a préfet was found who signed my passport.

One may imagine that I did not let the grass grow under my feet once I had the required permission. It always seemed so strange to me that permission to leave Russia was just as difficult to obtain as permission to enter it.

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was British Minister to Roumania for a short time, but his stay was so brief that scarcely any members of the English colony ever saw him.

The most popular by far of the British Ministers was Sir John Kennedy, who with his family remained for some seven or eight years in Bucarest. The family consisted of four sons and one daughter. "Pat" Kennedy I refer to elsewhere as a playmate of Prince Carol. Two of his gallant brothers fell in the Great War. Miss Kennedy was, and still is, a great favourite with the Queen of Roumania.

Sir John and Lady Kennedy with their daughter (the sons were for the greater part of the time at school in England) were constant attendants at the English church services. They took a great interest in all that concerned the British colony, and were much kinder and more hospitable than any of their predecessors.

Of all the foreign colonies in Bucarest the English was, until a few years ago, the smallest. The Embassy, a few business men with their families, a number of governesses, an English doctor, and a bank manager were the sum total. There was no English church, but service was held once every Sunday in a schoolroom of the Jewish mission, by the missionary to the Jews, who spoke English remarkably well and had taken orders in England, although himself of Jewish descent. His wife was English, and perhaps on that account their house was the centre of any hospitality that was shown to the English colony. Very pleasant and homely were the little meetings that were held at the vicarage near the school—the working parties once a fortnight at which garments were made for the poor Jews, the weekly choir practice, and the informal afternoon teas.

The visitors were mostly governesses, and what a delight it was to have a cup of real English tea and a good chat without being obliged to be on the *qui vive* for any mistake that the speaker would be likely to make (as one had to be when speaking to one's pupils)! How one laughed at any little *faux pas* made by the native handmaiden, as for instance one afternoon, when our hostess rang for another cup and saucer, and the little maid put her

head into the room to inquire in a hushed voice, "A *clean* cup and saucer, Madame?"

The working parties were always well attended. Each member cheerfully paid her franc monthly in order to pay for materials, and no element of discord was ever present till much later on, when some fresh arrivals from England took it upon themselves to cavil at the manner in which the garments were distributed. These were always given to the Jewish poor (there were no English poor in Bucarest), and, as some folk have no love for Jews, the newcomers protested that the articles should be distributed to people of all nationalities. This arrangement was finally decided upon, although it was quite unnecessary as it turned out. The German poor were well looked after, the French also, and it was really only the Jewish poor who seemed to be in need. Besides, as we were considerably indebted to the Jewish missionary for his kind help on Sundays, as well as for the hospitality shown us on every occasion, it was, in my opinion, only right to help on their work by every means in our power. At the time of which I speak the missionary had no remuneration for the English service on Sundays. In later years an arrangement was made by which the missionary gave a third part of his time to the English community, in consideration for a fixed sum raised by them annually.

I am glad to learn that an English church has now been built to meet the needs of the greatly increased colony.

The English Church in Roumania, as in most parts of southern Europe, belongs to the diocese of

Gibraltar. We were visited pretty often by the Bishop—Bishop Collins—who proposed to visit all parts of his diocese, which included Smyrna, at least once a year. Poor man! he did not live to carry out very many of his plans. He caught a severe cold whilst travelling in Russia, but still insisted on preaching during his stay in Bucarest. The consequence was that he became seriously ill, and for a long time had to refrain from any active work. When his health improved he again resumed his duties, hoping that a journey to the East would complete the cure. Great was the pleasure when it was announced that we might expect a visit from the Bishop. He arrived, but how changed in appearance! he was not the same man. He left Roumania with the intention of visiting Smyrna. A great reception was planned for him there, all the English colony was *en fête*, and at the hour when the steamer was expected all those who could possibly manage it wended their way to the quay. Alas! their pleasure was turned into grief by the news that it was only a dead body they were to meet—the Bishop had died on board.

The mourning was great throughout the whole diocese, as Bishop Collins was so greatly beloved. A charming personality, a student in his tastes more than an active worker, he had gained the esteem and affection of all those (preachers and people) who belonged to his diocese. His wife, too, had been very much liked. She was his elder by some years, but they were very devoted to each other. Indeed, there is no doubt that her death, which took place only about a year before his own, had such an effect upon him as to hasten the sad event.

The war has been responsible for many things. One of the few good things is that the English have at last discovered Roumania. The presence of British visitors in a Bucarest hotel no longer calls for comment. A British Chamber of Commerce has even been established, and a British club is talked about, and will no doubt soon be an accomplished fact.

How good it is to know that the British is now not the smallest but the largest colony!

CHAPTER XX

The French colony—An outspoken abbé—The German colony—Its schools, churches, and hospitals—A split in the camp of deaconesses—Teaching or nursing ?—A well-conducted hospital—Roumanian hospitals—An eminent surgeon, Dr Thomas Jonescu—An erratic American dentist—His exclusive practice—Leaves a Prince waiting with open mouth whilst he goes on a trip to Sinaia.

THE French are fairly well represented in Roumania, and they possess a very fine church in one of the best streets in Bucarest, which is called "The Cathedral." The Bishop's name was Hornstein, which seemed to me to sound rather more like Jerusalem than Paris. Every year, in the month of May, a priest came from Paris to hold a kind of mission. For two consecutive years this duty devolved upon a certain abbé, who aroused great interst in the town. He was a very short man of rather insignificant appearance, but very clever, and decidedly outspoken in his utterances. The hour of service was 5 p.m., and woe betide the unlucky worshipper who arrived late. The abbé would stop, fix his eyes on the latecomer, and then very coldly point him or her—generally the latter—to a vacant seat. When quiet was restored, he would resume his discourse. His methods and style aroused the curiosity of the people, who flocked in hundreds to hear him. The Cathedral was always packed, French, Roumanians, English all being represented.

At first the Roumanians, who are noted for their unpunctuality, were late for the service, but after one or two experiences they were careful to come in time. All the little weaknesses of modern society, such as love of dress, extravagance, the rush after amusements, were exposed and criticised unmercifully. People never seemed to resent his outspoken utterances, although in many cases his words must have gone home.

The French have also some schools, but they are mostly convent schools, the teachers being monks or nuns.

The best-known French school in Bucarest is the " Dames de Sion," the instruction given there being of a high order, the French language naturally being predominant. The school is not only attended by French children; Roumanians who cannot afford to send their offspring to Paris, often taking advantage of it.

I knew some girls who went to the " Dames de Sion," and very curious stories they used to relate about the greed for money displayed by the nuns. For example, if a larger table were required in one of the class-rooms, each pupil would be asked to bring a certain sum of money to defray the cost. Constant requests were made to the pupils for small sums to be used for the decoration of the chapel. A small statue was required for this niche, a picture for another; and as for flowers for the altar, they were *always* needed.

This procedure caused a good deal of discontent, as Roumanians did not see why they should be called upon to provide decorations for a chapel that had no connection with their Church.

The expulsion of monks and nuns from France caused a great influx of both into Roumania, just as it did, unfortunately, into our own country, so that more convent schools are now scattered throughout the country than was formerly the case.

I used to visit one of the convents, as there was an Irish nun there who attracted me very much. This convent was called "Die engelische Damen." Since returning to England I have been much amused by a description I read somewhere of this same convent. The sapient writer announced that it derived its name from the fact that it was founded by some English ladies in bygone times. Of course, the German name, which, curiously enough, it has always borne, means "The Angel Ladies."

Of all the foreign colonies established in Roumania the German was, before the war, the largest. It had schools, churches, and hospitals, and the trade carried on was considerable. There was a very large girls' school in Bucarest, where German, French, and English were taught. The children were not only well taught but well trained. The German love of order and discipline was observable in every department. This establishment formed a striking contrast to the Roumanian schools, where a good deal of *laissez-aller* prevails.

Examinations were held once a year, twenty minutes only being allowed for each subject. Germans do not consider examinations a great test of children's knowledge; they trust more to their progress during the year.

The school was under the control of the deaconesses, who undertook the teaching of the German language, being at the same time nursing

sisters. They came from Kaiserswerth, a large training college and nursing establishment on the Rhine, in which, by the way, our own Florence Nightingale gained some of her earlier experience.

At first a very large contingent of deaconesses was sent to Bucarest, but some years ago there was a split in the camp. The dispute was as to whether the teaching or the nursing should predominate. In the end, it was decided that half the number of deaconesses should remain at the school, concentrating all their energies on teaching, whilst the other half should open a hospital and devote their time and energy entirely to the care of the sick.

Sister Ida, who was at the head of the nursing establishment, was a very clever woman, with a wonderful power of organisation. Energetic to a degree, she never rested till she succeeded in opening the hospital, equipped with every modern convenience. A small chapel was attached,where their own German pastor officiated, so that the sisters were not under the necessity of attending the principal German church.

I was rather amused, whilst the dispute referred to was at its height, to have one of the nursing sisters remark to me, "Fancy! the only concession that we can wrest from the other side is, that when we die we may be buried in their cemetery!" It seemed to me rather meagre comfort.

The boys' school was also well attended. It was run on strictly German lines, and was under the supervision of the German pastor. The church, which was close to the school, was quite a fine building, standing a little back from the street. It was a typical German church in its simplicity,

severe to the last degree, till Queen Elizabeth conceived the fantastic idea of decorating it, and thereby turned it into a building strongly resembling a Jewish synagogue. When I entered it for the first time after it had been decorated I could scarcely believe my eyes. Was this the German church? I asked myself. Galleries, pillars, and pulpit were hung with crimson velvet on which were texts of scripture in gilt German characters! giving the whole church a tawdry as well as a decidedly Jewish appearance.

A true German church is simplicity itself, so that the contrast struck me immediately. How an artistic woman, as Queen Elizabeth undoubtedly was, could perpetrate such an outrage upon good taste passed my comprehension.

The hospital, situated at some distance from the town, equipped, as I have said, with every modern convenience, was a boon to all foreigners. There was better nursing to be had there than in the Roumanian hospitals, as all the sisters were well trained. The hospital was visited by both Roumanian and German doctors; in fact, an inmate could have any doctor he wished to call in.

The food was very good, and plenty of milk was always to be had. Buffalo milk, by the way, is very much used in Roumania; and although at first one finds it very rich, still, after becoming accustomed to it, cow's milk seems poor in comparison.

One thing I have noticed abroad (this is also by the way) which seems to me worthy of imitation in England. It is that milk is always boiled. No one thinks of drinking milk without having it boiled

first. As milk carries infection so readily, this seems to me a necessary precaution.

The Roumanian hospitals cannot be held up as a pattern to other countries, as, in regard to nursing, they are very much behind-hand. Trained nurses are unknown. Any woman who applies may be engaged as "nurse"—the only stipulation being that she must don cap and apron for the arrival of the visiting doctors, or for an operation. During the rest of the day she may wear what she likes. These attendants, for they are no more, seldom master even the first rudiments of nursing.

The manager or director of the hospital (not necessarily a doctor) is allowed so much a head for the feeding of the patients. If he can contrive to do it economically, the surplus goes, of course, into his own pocket.

I went to see a sick friend in the largest hospital in Bucarest, and the food that I saw for distribution in the wards was of very inferior quality. My friend, who had a private room, had everything sent to her from outside, the medical student who looked in from time to time advising her not even to drink the milk provided; presumably it was too well watered.

The one redeeming feature of the hospitals is that they are quite free. No matter of what nationality you are, you will be attended (and nursed after a fashion) quite free of charge. If a patient has a little interest, or knows anyone who will speak for him, he may even be allotted a private room.

The peasants, who have never had any pampering, are often quite happy and contented with their treatment at the hospital, and leave the place with regret.

The inefficiency of the hospital nurses is all the more remarkable when one remembers the high qualifications and great skill of the physicians and surgeons of Roumania.

The most eminent surgeon in Bucarest is Prof. Thomas Jonescu, brother of M. Take Jonescu. Though not the actual inventor of the anæsthetic stovaine, it was he who discovered the almost miraculous power obtained by the addition of strychnia. This wonderful compound, applied locally, absolutely deprives the patient of sensation in the region to be operated upon. I heard Prof. Jonescu once declare that he had cut off a leg whilst the subject of the operation calmly looked on and made remarks about the performance.

Everyone who has lived in Bucarest has known or heard stories of the remarkable American dentist Dr Y——. He was of an extremely taciturn disposition, very erratic in his ways and with few intimate friends. Notwithstanding his peculiarities, he had the names of the best families in Roumania on his books, including the late Queen, whose confidence he enjoyed for many years. Probably it was on this account that he was so very careful as to new patients. One year he went away for a holiday, and, on returning, his assistant, who had not been long in his service, or indeed in Bucarest, proudly showed him the list of new patients he had gained. Dr Y—— took the list, looked through it silently, and then with his pencil calmly struck out name after name till very few were left on the sheet. He returned the list to the astonished assistant with the remark, " I do not attend such people."

One of his patients was Prince G——, who died some

years ago. An experience of his with Dr Y—— caused great amusement, and it *was* rather amusing —to others. At the hour appointed by the doctor, Prince G—— arrived and took his place in the operating chair. After working for some minutes, the doctor, with a muttered apology, left the room, leaving Prince G——, with his mouth open, momentarily expecting his return. As time passed and the doctor did not reappear, the Prince became impatient and rang the bell. What was his amazement to learn from the servant that Doctor Y—— had left for Sinaia!

In spite of his peculiar ways, Dr Y—— is remembered with pleasure by many people. For one thing, he made the best plum puddings I ever tasted! At Christmas time he made a number of these puddings and distributed them among the families of his friends and acquaintances.

CHAPTER XXI

The coming of King Carol—Roumanians dislike the Germans and *hate* the Hungarians—King Carol a reticent, self-contained, lonely man—His only public appearances—A ball for the *hoi polloi*—King Carol's father his sole adviser—His desire to abdicate—Roumania owes much to the late King.

THE circumstances attending King Carol's coming to Roumania were undoubtedly of a romantic character. The leading Liberal statesman at the time of the deposition of Prince Cuza (the last native ruler of Roumania) was Jean Bratiano, whose son—similarly named—was Premier during the early part of the war. Bratiano had completed his education at the University of Bonn, and this circumstance, unimportant in itself, was fraught with great consequences for his country. The Liberal statesman, comparing German methods with those to which he had been accustomed in Roumania, fell under the Teutonic spell, and when a new ruler was required for his country it was toward the Hohenzollern family he turned his eyes. The choice ultimately fell upon Prince Carol, a scion of the Roman Catholic branch of that family.

As it was well known that Austria would object to any such arrangement, obvious difficulties lay in the way of conveying the prospective king through that country. Bratiano hit upon a somewhat

theatrical plan. Inducing Prince Carol to enact the rôle of valet, he travelled with him from Vienna. There were no railways available in those days, and the whole journey to the Roumanian frontier was made by steamboat. At the last stopping-place on Austro-Hungarian soil passports were demanded, and the German valet, " Anton Küchner," strangely forgot his name. There was consternation for a few minutes, and official suspicion was aroused that all was not as it should be, but Bratiano retained his presence of mind, and, making it appear that " Küchner " was a stupid country lad, gave the names himself. The danger was averted, and Roumania was reached in safety. The Prince met with a very good reception from his future subjects, whose respect he certainly commanded throughout his subsequent career. From his accession in 1866, he reigned for some time as " Prince of Roumania," and it was not, indeed, until after the battle of Plevna, when the Roumanians succeeded in completely throwing off the yoke of the Turks, that he assumed the title of King. His crown was made of iron obtained from a cannon captured at Plevna.

How the country developed under the rule of the late King Carol is generally known. Methods of transport had hitherto been of an archaic character, but soon the country was intersected by an efficient railway system. This opened the way for industrial enterprise, and factories were established for the manufacture of furniture, glass, cloth, cheese, etc. These undertakings were chiefly conducted by Germans, and it is an open secret that the King had substantial interest in all or nearly all of them. The comment is frequently heard that the personal

fortunes of King Carol became vastly improved after his accession to the throne.

The late King Carol, as has already been indicated, was very German in his ideas and tastes.

As a Latin race the sympathies of the Roumanians are naturally inclined to the French. French is the prevailing language in Roumania, or perhaps I had better say was, for, as I remark elsewhere, English is now gaining ground rapidly. French fashions are followed, French literature is the most widely read, and it is to Paris that the majority of young Roumanians are sent to finish their studies.

In no class of society does one find a feeling favourable to the Germans. Nothing in the German character appeals to the finer feelings of the Roumanians. German is spoken, after a fashion, but no interest is shown in the study of it, as is the case where French and English are concerned.

King Carol was a reticent, self-contained man. In all those long years spent in Roumania he was never known to have a personal friend. There was an aloofness about him which was one of his distinguishing characteristics, and he never seemed to unbend. I have been frequently told that when he accorded an audience he never sat down during the interview, even although it might last an hour. The visitor was therefore obliged to stand also. It was very seldom that the King was seen at any public gathering or entertainment—indeed, never save when his presence was absolutely necessary.

During the winter three public balls were given at the Court, besides more informal dances and soirées. The first ball of the season was given on New Year's Day, and to it anyone could go. It was

only necessary to write one's name in the "Congratulations Book" provided at the entrance of the Palace, and an invitation was at once forwarded. These gatherings were most amusing, the wives of butchers and bakers wearing the most extravagant toilets. The crush was tremendous, and reached its culminating point when supper was announced. Then each one's aim was to get downstairs as quickly as possible in order to get a good place at table. Elbows were freely used to force a passage; common courtesy was not even thought of. What the King's thoughts were at such a sight it would be interesting to know, but they were never divulged. The Court of course had a table apart. The crush was so great that dancing was well-nigh impossible, and, as all the available seats in the ballroom were quickly occupied, it speedily became very tiresome for those who were obliged to stand.

An acquaintance of mine told me that as she was very tired on one of these occasions her husband asked a lackey to fetch a chair. To their astonishment he replied that it was impossible to do so, as the King had given strict orders that chairs were not to be moved from one room to another. It seems strange that a King should trouble himself with such details.

Although the King was a splendid horseman, he was rarely seen on horseback, except on the 10th of May, when the great review was held; then he always rode from the Métropole (Cathedral) surrounded by a brilliant suite, to the Boulevard, where the march-past took place. As for walking, the King was never seen on foot, in the town at any rate. All such exercise was, I believe, taken in the park at Cotroceni,

the residence of the Crown Prince and Princess, situated about two miles distant from the capital.

In truth the King lived a lonely life, only being seen by the public when some function required his presence. He was a born soldier, and brought the army up to its present state of efficiency. The government of Roumania was by no means an easy task, and so the King must have found, as has been seen by some letters of his to his father which were published a year or two ago. His father seems to have been his constant friend and adviser in all difficult moments, and that his advice was always good has been seen in the light of later events.

Several times King Carol thought of abdicating, but, his father strongly opposing such a step, he practised patience, and luckily for the country remained at the head of affairs till the last. Roumania owes much to King Carol—its progress, prosperity, and present position as an advanced and enlightened country.

CHAPTER XXII

Queen Elizabeth (Carmen Sylva)—An early dilemma: no divorcees, no Court—A quaint divorce story—The true story of the meeting of Carol and Elizabeth—Did she love the country or its King?—Her dead child's tomb—The Queen as a writer—Her passion for music—Pity the poor professional!—Cold soup for the King—The Queen's personal appearance—Her asylum for the blind, and the German manager who failed—"My Sixtieth Birthday," and how it was spent—The Queen and the *enfants terribles*—The orphans of the "Asyle Hélène"—Cotroceni and its unlucky palace.

ON adopting the responsibility of a reigning Queen, Carmen Sylva was faced with the problem of who should be entitled to visit at Court. In talking the matter over with the Court Chamberlain, she expressed the wish that no lady should be invited to Court who had been divorced. Great was the amazement of the Chamberlain. "But your Majesty could never form a Court under those conditions," was his quick reply. Finally, after much discussion, the decision was arrived at that no lady who had been divorced more than twice should be eligible for Court entertainments. I think this little fact (for it is a fact) sufficiently demonstrates how very lightly marriage ties were then thought of in Roumania; and I must confess that things are not very much better in these days, as divorces are still sought under the most trivial pretexts. Incompatibility of temperament is frequently accepted as a sufficient plea.

If a man divorce his wife or is divorced by her, the law allows him to marry again but not to marry the same woman. This very often gives rise to piquant situations. Sometimes a man after a few weeks' separation realises the truth of the aphorism, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," and yearns to return to his first love. He is met, however, by the stern decree of the law, "Thou shalt not." Being unable to alter the law, he frequently takes unto himself his former helpmeet, and lives with her without the sanction of Church or State.

A rather amusing case came under my own observation some years ago. A professor of one of the colleges was betrothed to a young girl whom I knew intimately. They seemed mutually attracted (not always the case in Roumanian marriages), and as the relatives on both sides seemed equally pleased, everything went as merrily as the proverbial wedding bell. The house was taken, furnished, and decorated. This is always the work of the bride, and is carried out at the expense of her parents, as the bridegroom-elect is not supposed to contribute anything towards setting up housekeeping. The marriage took place, and a great reception was given at which champagne flowed freely. All seemed to go well for some months, then the first little rift in the lute appeared. Vague stories were heard that all was not in harmony at the professor's; then, later on, that the couple were going to seek a divorce. They not only sought it, but obtained it, the lady returning to her parents, and the gentleman resuming his former bachelor life.

All this may seem commonplace enough, but the sequel was a curious one. The summer holidays were approaching, Madame longed to travel, but to

travel alone was not to be thought of. Her former husband was approached on the subject. He agreed to accompany her; the details of the journey were arranged, and they started off together. One might have thought that they would have been quite reconciled to remain together after that. Not at all. On their return, they calmly said "Good-bye" to each other, she once more returning to her parents, and he to his bachelor quarters.

The romantic story of how the Prince of Roumania met Princess Elizabeth of Neuwied at the palace in Berlin, and caught her in his arms as she was falling downstairs, has been so often denied by the late Queen, that it is unnecessary to refer further to it here.

The real meeting came about in this wise. Princess Elizabeth was staying at Cologne with her mother for a short time, and one evening arrangements were made to attend a concert. In the course of the afternoon the Prince of Roumania called on the two ladies, to the great delight of the Princess. She plied him with questions about the country and people, and listened eagerly to everything that he could tell her. So interested was she that concert and everything else were forgotten—she could only think and talk of Roumania.

On being told later that the Prince of Roumania sought her in marriage, she readily consented, not, I think, so much from love of the Prince as from interest in his country. One child was the result of the marriage, a little girl named Marie, who died at the age of five from an attack of scarlatina. This was a great grief to the parents, especially to the Queen, who was passionately fond of children. She

had the child buried in the park of Cotroceni, a palace at a short distance from Bucarest. The tomb erected there is of white marble, and represents the child asleep in her little bed. The coverlet seems to have become disarranged, and one little foot is showing. It is a pretty idea, and has been remarkably well carried out by the artist. The tomb is surrounded by a high railing, and is always guarded by a policeman.

The late Queen of Roumania was an extremely gifted woman, an authoress, linguist, painter, and musician. She has been well known to the literary world under the pseudonym Carmen Sylva, derived from the Latin words for "song" and "forest."

Her books, *Deficit*, *Letters from the Battlefield*, *Thoughts of a Queen*, are extremely interesting. But music was a passion with her. A violinist or pianist who decided to come and give a concert at Bucarest was sure of an enthusiastic welcome from the Queen. He would be summoned to the palace to play for her Majesty, but his difficulty would be to get away again.

She would be so entranced in the music, asking for one piece after another, that the poor tired musician would barely get away in time for the evening concert. Sometimes the performance at the palace was not quite private; the Queen would issue a number of invitations to a matinée. On one of these occasions a friend of mine was present, and she gave me a most amusing account of the affair. The matinée continued till far into the evening, the Queen, as usual, asking for "one more sonata," till the King (who wisely absented himself from such frivolities), feeling the want of his dinner, lost

patience. A lackey entered and announced to her Majesty in a low tone that dinner was served. She nodded smilingly but did not move. A second time the unlucky man was obliged to appear, but it was not till the King had sent three times to say that the soup was on the table that the Queen reluctantly decided to dismiss her guests.

The late Queen was also a poetess of no mean order, composing sonnets at odd moments—sometimes even during the night if she were in a wakeful mood. The King would then be awakened from a sound sleep to pass judgment upon the work.

After that, one will not be astonished to hear that the King of Roumania had a sweet temper.

As a young girl, the Queen, as her photographs show, was very pretty, with fair hair and rosy cheeks—the usual type of German beauty. In later life she became very stout, and with her extremely red face framed in perfectly white hair she presented a rather remarkable appearance. She never wore either hat or bonnet, simply a lace mantilla thrown carelessly over her head.

One never saw her without a smile on her face, so that one could not help wondering if it were still there during her sleep. She had very affable manners, and could be extremely charming.

Now, one must not think that the Queen was only artistic. That is not so; the practical side of her character was seen from time to time. At the time of the war against Turkey her Majesty did splendid work. Ladies were invited to the palace to help in making bandages, others in making garments; a

regular scheme of practical aid for the soldiers was organised by the Queen.

She also founded an asylum for the blind. In former times blind persons were allowed to get their living as best they could, by begging or otherwise; but the Queen's scheme provided them with food and lodging, and at the same time they were taught a useful trade. Subscriptions from abroad poured in (who could refuse a Queen?), and I believe Andrew Carnegie was a generous subscriber.

Unfortunately, as time went on, unpleasant rumours about this blind asylum were rife in town. When its affairs came to be examined, it was found that the superintendent (a German) had been guilty of gross mismanagement. It was a great shock to the Queen, as she had fully trusted the German. The King was very much annoyed about the affair, and insisted on the Queen giving up all active participation in the asylum.

One felt rather sorry for King Carol at times. He was so reticent, self-contained and controlled, that he must have found extremely galling the annoying affairs into which he was constantly drawn by the great activity or enthusiasm of the Queen.

She was, as the Germans so happily express it, a little *überspannt*. I shall never forget the time she attained her sixtieth year. On this occasion she penned an article entitled "My Sixtieth Birthday," which was published in all the papers. In it she expressed her joy that she had now attained her sixtieth year, as all the storms and troubles of life were happily behind her. She then went on to relate how she had spent this happy day. In the evening she had gone to the theatre; on returning

home her little deaf-and-dumb maid, whom she had brought with her from Germany, was hidden under the table, and from there discoursed sweet music from a musical box. All the Queen's little kittens were decorated with new ribbons for the occasion; whilst on the table and chairs were the presents that had arrived during her absence. Much time was taken up examining all these treasures; then after another tune from the musical box, and a last kiss for the kitties, she prepared to go to rest in a small room adjoining her boudoir. She was anxious to tell us that she never disturbed the King when she came in late. This was very considerate of her, but probably he lost enough rest when she was seized with her fits of poetic inspiration.

As I have already remarked, the late Queen was very fond of children, and always happy when surrounded by them. But there were moments of anxiety for their elders, as the little mites could not be expected always to exercise discretion.

A lady whom I knew had been in Paris for a few years with her husband. On returning to Bucarest the Queen expressed a wish to see her little boys. The children were taken to the palace and presented to her Majesty, who caressed them and made a great fuss over them. In the course of conversation she inquired, "Now, children, what did you think about me when you knew you were coming to see a Queen? What did you think I should be like?" To the dismay of the mother, a clear treble voice piped out, "I didn't think you would be so old." The Queen, however, took it very well, merely remarking, "But grandmamma is also old." "Oh no," objected both children; "grand-

mamma is not old; she hasn't white hair like you." One may imagine the relief of the children's mother when the audience was at an end.

Children loved the Queen. The present chargé-d'affaires, M. Boerescu, was a courtier even in his childhood. When quite a little chap the Queen kissed him one day. For nearly a week he would not let the spot be washed.

At one side of the park, Cotroceni, there stands a fine handsome building named "Asyle Hélène" after its foundress, Princess Hélène Cuza. It is a school for orphan girls, in which they receive instruction and are trained for domestic service. The girls are also taught embroidery and fine needlework, and the specimens they turn out are really very creditable to them. Should one of their number receive an offer of marriage and the young man prove to be a suitable *parti*, consent is willingly given and the necessary arrangements made by the authorities of the orphanage. The bride-elect is not only supplied with a complete trousseau, but is also the recipient of a certain number of articles for use in her house.

The late Queen took great interest in the girls of the "Asyle Hélène," and arranged many little treats for them from time to time, in consequence of which she was greatly beloved. As I have already mentioned, the Queen's little daughter, Princess Marie, lies buried in the park of Cotroceni, "placed," as the Queen herself said, "in the care of the orphan girls of the Asyle Hélène."

The park itself is of considerable extent, and contains some fine trees. The palace stands on an eminence commanding a good view of the town;

indeed, from the windows of Queen Marie's boudoir one can see straight up the Boulevard for a considerable distance.

The late King and Queen were very fond of Cotroceni, and frequently stayed there. In their time it was a simple country house, with long French windows opening out on the parterres of flowers in front.

On the marriage of Prince Ferdinand the old house was razed to the ground and a newer and more pretentious residence erected which was specially intended for the use of the young couple. Cotroceni, unfortunately, has never proved a very healthy site. Even at the time of the rebuilding of the palace the workmen were constantly being attacked by malaria. It was at Cotroceni that the present King was, many years ago, attacked by typhoid fever, when his life was despaired of. The latest tragic occurrence at the unlucky palace has been the lamented death of little Prince Mircea, when typhoid again made its dreaded presence manifest.

CHAPTER XXIII

Ferdinand of Sigmaringen becomes heir to the throne—He is a good soldier and a favourite with his officers—The friend of the Allies—His marriage with Princess Marie—The Princess's home-coming: a lonely stranger—A gala performance—The Prince's mission to Germany—Roumanian officers meet half a dozen Herr "Mahlzeits."

AS the late King Carol of Roumania had no children (his little daughter having died young), he chose, with the consent of the Roumanians, his nephew Ferdinand of Sigmaringen as his successor. The latter, like his uncle, was a Roman Catholic, and to this the Roumanians made no objection, only stipulating that in the event of his marriage his children should be baptised into the Greek Church —a very natural condition, I think.

The present King of Roumania has many characteristics of his race, is a great stickler for etiquette and a good soldier, but is not so versed in the art of diplomacy as King Carol. On account of his soldierly qualities he is a great favourite with the officers of his army. His accession to the throne was not looked forward to with universally confident feelings, but he has surprised most people by the manner in which he has adapted himself to the position. He carries himself much more assuredly, and has a dignified bearing that impresses the Roumanians. He was, I believe, entirely at one with his people as regards the late war.

He married Princess Marie of Edinburgh, and well do I remember the day of the bride's entrance into Bucarest. It was an awkward moment for her arrival, as Queen Elizabeth was just then absent from the country and there was really no one to initiate her into the mysteries of Court life in Roumania. It was said that the Duchess of Edinburgh had wished her daughter to be accompanied by an English maid-of-honour; but on that point King Carol was very obstinate, and would not allow it on any account. It must have been a lonely time for the young girl of seventeen, in a strange country and surrounded by strangers. Even the King and Prince Ferdinand came under this description, as I believe she had seen very little of them before her marriage.

The day of her state entrance into the capital was one of great excitement. The streets were decorated; a profusion of flowers was in evidence, and of course the national colours, red, blue, and yellow, were to be seen everywhere. I had a place on a balcony near the royal palace, from which I had a splendid view.

Everyone was eager to see the Princess, and as the time approached for the procession to leave the railway station the excitement became intense. Finally some mounted police made their appearance in order to clear the way, after them a detachment of cavalry, then at last the royal carriage. It was a state carriage, glass on all sides, and it was simply embowered in flowers. Princess Marie, looking rather pale and scared, was seated beside King Carol, whilst Prince Ferdinand occupied a back seat. It seemed rather hard lines for the newly-made hus-

band to be relegated to a solitary back seat, but naturally it could not be arranged otherwise in the Queen's absence. The procession went straight to the Métropole, where the marriage service was performed for the third time. In the evening there was a gala performance at the National Theatre.

Some friends and I shared a box, from which we had a good view of the royal box. Princess Marie looked charmingly sweet and girlish, with her turquoise ornaments on throat and hair. Prince Ferdinand on this occasion had a front seat, as the King was not present. The latter very rarely attended a theatre.

When the present King was simply Prince Ferdinand, he was sent on a mission to Germany by King Carol. In his suite were three or four officers who had no acquaintance whatever with the German language.

On the day of their arrival at S—— the Prince and his suite were entertained to a banquet by the officers of the garrison. The Roumanian officers entered the anteroom before the Prince appeared, and were somewhat at a loss. Now all travellers know that Continental people in such circumstances introduce themselves by mentioning their names. Those acquainted with Germany will also know that the invariable greeting at dinner is "Mahlzeit," an expression which, whilst it literally means "meal-time," is really equivalent to *bon appetit.* So it came about that when a German officer with his hand on his heart approached a Roumanian, and bowing said "Mahlzeit," the latter responded with "Bibescu," as he warmly shook hands. To the greeting "Mahlzeit," tendered by

another of their hosts, a second Roumanian officer murmured "Greciano," and Florescu and others followed suit.

Later, in conversation with Prince Ferdinand, the puzzled Roumanians commented upon the curious fact that their hosts all belonged to the same family and bore the name of "Mahlzeit." The officer who told me the story said that when the Prince fairly understood what had occurred he roared with laughter. "I have never," my friend said, "seen the Prince so relax his reserve. He simply could not contain himself for some minutes, and for a long time he made a point of greeting us with 'Mahlzeit' upon every possible occasion."

CHAPTER XXIV

The Princess in a merry mood—How Prince Ferdinand deluged the tablecloth—A curtain lecture for Princess Marie ?—The royal children—Elizabeth a beauty—Mignonne (Marie) "a beautiful little snow-maiden," yet piquant and merry—Ileana of the china-blue eyes has a great idea of her own importance—Prince Carol, a fine fellow, learns politeness—He and Elizabeth eat raw carrots in the Minister's garden—A war game with Pat Kennedy, when neither would be a Boer—Pretty Prince Nicolas, "a little terror"—Nicolas as a sailor—His watch on deck and his sea-strut—An adventure at Piræus—A sailor valet—Nicolas's first communion and his struggle with the bread—The royal governesses—A little story about the Queen of Holland.

PRINCESS MARIE must often have been amused at the German habits of the people by whom she was surrounded. Although King Carol was so firm in not allowing her to be accompanied by even one English lady-in-waiting, that did not prevent him from surrounding himself with Germans. To a large extent the etiquette of the Court was German, and unrefined German practices were frequently observable at table.

As many people are aware, they had a horrid habit in the highest circles in the Fatherland of rinsing the mouth at table after eating, and then ejecting the water into a finger-glass. On the occasion of a big dinner-party, a few weeks after the marriage, Princess Marie was in a gay mood. Seeing her husband perform the customary mouth ablution, and prompted by a spirit of mischief, she raised her

finger and poked it into his distended cheek. Tableau ! The water spurted across the table, and there was something like consternation for a moment or two. For my own part, I was rejoiced when the scene was described to me by a friend who was present. It showed that the poor little lonely Princess had not lost her spirit. Prince Ferdinand had sense enough not to appear angry, whatever he may have felt, but the King was inexpressibly shocked.

The present King and Queen have now five children, two sons and three daughters, all of them handsome, as might be expected with such handsome parents.

Princess Elizabeth, the eldest girl, now the wife of the Crown Prince of Greece, is a great beauty, with perfect features and lovely fair hair.

Princess Marie (the second girl), or Mignonne, as she is affectionately called, was a beautiful little snow-maiden. She is quite healthy, I believe, but one cannot help being struck with the perfect whiteness of her skin ; her hand lies in yours like a snowflake. Her nose is of the *retroussé* type, and, together with a merry pair of grey eyes, gives a piquant expression to her face.

The youngest girl, Ileana, is also fair, with china-blue eyes. Even as a very young child she had a great idea of her own importance, and if the person to whom she was presented did not please her she could not be induced to be pleasant. At the garden parties at Sinaia it was most amusing to watch her parading about among the guests with quite a consequential air, and she was not much more than a baby then.

Prince Carol, the eldest son, recently married to

Princess Hélène of Greece, is a fine fellow, though I dare say he is much changed since the days when it was his greatest delight to get with his sister Elizabeth into the garden of M. Costinescu, Minister of Finance, and eat raw carrots! Well, I dare say they did them no harm, as no complaint has ever been made of their digestions.

At that time Prince Carol's playmate was little Pat Kennedy, the youngest son of Sir John Kennedy, the English Minister. Usually they agreed very well together, but one day (it was during the Boer War) King Carol happened to pass through the apartment where the children were playing. To his surprise a heated discussion was taking place. On inquiring the cause of the dispute, he found that they wished to play soldiers, but neither of them would consent to be a Boer!

The King soon settled the point; he ruled that as Pat was English, he must act the English soldier, while Prince Carol, greatly to his disgust, was obliged to take the part of a Boer. He exclaimed, "I don't care. I have an English mother anyhow."

Prince Nicolas, the second son, named after the Czar of Russia, is a nice boy. When tiny he was almost too pretty for a boy. He was, however, a real little terror.

At the afternoon teas at the palace he was occasionally present with his brother and sisters. He would offer cake with such insistence that one was obliged to take some whether one wished it or not. I remember an acquaintance of mine being asked to recite at one of the Princess's "At homes." All the time she was reciting she was intently watched by Prince Nicolas. Immediately she had finished,

the little imp placed himself in front of her and faithfully imitated every one of her gestures, to the great amusement of the assembled company, but rather to the confusion of my friend.

Prince Nicolas was thought to be rather delicate, and was frequently ordered to take sea voyages, much to his delight, as he was very fond of the sea. On one of those voyages, a few years ago, a small adventure befell him. Princess Mignonne and he, accompanied by a confidential maid, embarked on a Roumanian steamer bound for Greece. Some friends of mine, M. and Mme. Nacescu and their daughter, who were also on board, gave me an interesting account of how Prince Nicolas comported himself. A thorough little sailor, he could be seen strutting the deck whatever the weather, generally with a huge chunk of bread sticking out of his pocket, at which he nibbled from time to time. Whilst the ship was lying at the Piræus, the port of Athens, the Greek military authorities took it into their heads that a soldier who had deserted was concealed on board.

There was a great hubbub, as both Greeks and Roumanians are always quick with their tongues. During the search that was made of the steamer, and the heated altercations which accompanied it, the royal children were kept closely to their cabin. The deserter was not found, so the Greeks were perforce obliged to withdraw. On the children regaining their freedom, little Prince Nicolas was heard to exclaim, "When we get back to Roumania and send a lot of our men here, then these Greeks will see something!"

He took a great fancy to one of the sailors on

board, and, as he would not be separated from him, the sailor was obliged to attend him on his return home as a sort of valet.

I met them in the woods at Sinaia one day, and it was most amusing to watch their proceedings. Princess Mignonne, Nicolas, and the maid were in front, the sailor some paces behind. The last-named was carrying something for the Prince—a knife, I believe; and he must assuredly have wished himself back on his ship to have a little peace. Nicolas would give him the knife to carry, then after a few steps he would turn and take it from him. This play was kept up till the children were out of sight, and I dare say it was continued much longer.

One Sunday all the royal children were at the monastery in Sinaia for service. It is the custom in the Greek Church for all children, whatever their age, to take the communion. Bread only is partaken of; the forehead is touched by the priest with a little brush dipped in oil; the communicant kisses the priest's hand, and the ceremony is ended.

Prince Carol, as the eldest, went up first to partake, the others following according to age. Little Nicolas, the youngest, was of course last, and, being in a panic lest he should be left there alone, he seized in his haste such a large piece of bread, that as they were filing out of church he could still be seen surreptitiously stuffing his finger into his mouth in an effort to facilitate its passage.

And now Nicolas is a big boy at Eton. I wonder if he retains his nautical tastes.

When the royal children were of an age to begin lessons, the first governess they had was an Irish lady, Miss F——, of whom the little ones were very

fond. Princess Marie, at a later period, went to Germany on a visit to her mother, the Duchess of Edinburgh, and upon her return she found that Miss W——, an Englishwoman and a former governess of the Queen of Holland, had been installed as governess to the children. It was said that she had been appointed by King Carol. Princess Marie certainly took umbrage at the arrangement, and said that she herself was the proper person to decide who should be the governess of her children. She never rested till Miss W—— was relieved of her charge.

I may be forgiven for relating here a little anecdote of Miss W——'s experiences at the Court of Holland. It appears that on one occasion the present Queen had incurred the displeasure of her governess, and as a punishment she was told to draw the map of Europe. This she did, but not restricting herself to the actual features of the map, she drew it to suit her own ideas, and probably with a spice of revenge governing them. When the map was finished Holland appeared in it a vast country, whilst England was the merest speck in the ocean.

The next governess to be engaged for the royal children of Roumania was Miss M——, who educated the children of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, and gained a great deal of credit through the social success of those charming sisters.

CHAPTER XXV

Winter in Roumania—Fêtes on the ice—An " escaped bear " causes a sensation, till he loses his head—Prince Carol establishes the bob-sleigh as a society craze—An unlucky accident to Princess Elizabeth—An end to bob-sleighing—Sleighs and winter costumes—Christmas—New Year's Eve.

WINTER is a very agreeable season of the year in Roumania for persons who enjoy good health and for whom frost and snow have no terrors. The cold is very severe at times, but the brilliant sunshine and the bright blue sky overhead compensate for the lowness of the temperature. The winter scene is seldom without snow, which lies deep on the ground; and although the law demands that each householder must clear it away from before his door, the regulation is rarely enforced. Indeed, I noticed that it was seldom cleared away from before the Prime Minister's own door, and I did think that perhaps example would have been better than precept. However, the snow remains on the pavements for days, till a good hard frost comes to solidify it, and only then, when it is absolutely dangerous to life and limb, do the authorities send out men with pickaxes to clear it away. It very often happens that, during this process, the pavement becomes cracked or broken, but that is all in the day's work, and will give employment to someone else.

Skating is a very popular amusement, and some very fine figure-skating has been seen on the lake in the small park of Cismegiu, but the ice is not so well cared for, as, for example, in Vienna. The cracks are never filled up, nor is the ice well swept. Cigarette-ends and burnt-out matches are often to be found lying about, so that skaters must go warily if they wish to avoid a nasty fall.

Sometimes in the evening fêtes are arranged, when fancy dress is worn, and the scene is very brilliant and animated when the skaters in their varied costumes are to be seen gliding gracefully round the decorated pond to the lively music of the band. I have seen some wonderfully effective costumes on such occasions—Russians with coats heavily befurred, Chinamen sailing along with pigtails flying, dainty little Japanese ladies with innumerable pins in their high coiled-up hair, and always, of course, Mephistopheles playing his usual part.

But what caused real excitement on one occasion was the appearance amongst the skaters of a huge Russian bear, who floundered about on the ice in most unwieldy fashion. His advent caused tremendous excitement, people imagining that it was a real bear which had escaped from captivity. Ladies flew from the furry monster shrieking—and, alas! not ladies only. When the bear, with huge extended arms, attempted pursuit, panic ensued, and there were loud cries for someone to shoot the animal. In the midst of the excitement, Master Bruin took off his head and revealed the laughing face of M. J——, a well-known figure in the society of the capital. The effect was electrical. Roars of

laughter were heard on every side, and throngs surrounded the bear impersonator, congratulating him upon the success of his joke. Ultimately he was made to resume his head and was carried round the ice in triumph.

Ski-ing is practised to some extent, but is not nearly so popular as skating. The country in the neighbourhood of Bucarest is not suitable for the practice of the Scandinavian sport.

Prince Carol had, I think, become acquainted with the bob-sleigh through some friends who had been to Switzerland; at any rate, he became such an enthusiast on the subject that he would not rest satisfied until a course was laid at Sinaia. So it came about one winter that bob-sleighing was the latest society craze. The starting-point was situated at a spot high up in the woods beyond the palace, and the course led down by many sharp curves and bends to the bridge over the river Pelesch, thence the winding route descending to the main road. A telephone was installed, so that notice of the arrival of a sleigh at the terminus could be given before another was permitted to start. The course was also guarded by soldiers to prevent imprudent spectators from running into danger.

The pleasure-loving Roumanians spared no expense over their new hobby. Bob-sleighs were procured from Switzerland at a cost of about £25 each, all the other necessaries were provided, and arrangements made without regard to expense.

Prince Carol and his friends were an enthusiastic and a merry crew, the spice of danger adding a zest to their enjoyment of the sport.

One unlucky day, however, an accident occurred

which put a sudden end to bob-sleighing at Sinaia. It chanced that a sleigh in which Princess Elizabeth was a passenger got into difficulties half-way down the track and became deeply embedded in the snow. The efforts to extricate it took time, and the occupants of the next sleigh becoming impatient, started on their downward career without awaiting the signal that all was clear. The horror of the helpless passengers in the royal sleigh may be imagined when they saw sleigh number two charging down upon them at furious speed. A collision seemed inevitable, and fatal results would most likely have ensued had it not been for the presence of mind and gallantry of Dr C——, who steered the second sleigh. Without a thought of the dreadful risk he ran, he turned his car into the face of the granite rock which bounded the course at this point. His own face was sadly damaged through the impact, but more serious consequences were averted. The royal sleigh was slightly involved, and Princess Elizabeth sustained a bruised ankle.

When the news of the accident arrived in Bucarest, King Carol was, I understand, very angry. Living the secluded life he did, he never had any sympathy with such new-fangled sports. A stern command came from Bucarest to cease bob-sleighing immediately, and the young people were ordered to return forthwith to the capital. This decree admitted of no appeal, so very ruefully the sleighs were stored away and the party returned to town.

Most probably Prince Carol received a good lecture from the King on the dangers of such sport. At any rate, there was no more bob-sleighing that winter.

Ordinary sleighing is always practised when the snow is deep enough. All the wheeled carriages disappear at once from the streets, and sleighs are the only vehicles to be seen. They are very neat little vehicles, quite low, and drawn by two horses. There is room for two occupants, with the driver in front seated on a narrow wooden ledge. At the back of the sleigh there is another wooden ledge which provides standing-room for one or two gentlemen.

Private sleighs are handsomely, some even splendidly, equipped. The rich furs of the sleigh robes and the silver-plated harness with its innumerable tinkling silver bells, the beautiful horses gaily caparisoned with bright blue and crimson woven nets which cover their quarters and spread back into the sleigh, thus protecting the occupants from the kicked-up snow, combine in adding wonderful life and colour to the picture of the Calea Victorie on a sunny winter day. When the snow is deep enough, the smooth, rapid motion is very exhilarating; but if one passes through a street which has been partly swept either by broom or by the wind, the bump, bump over the paved street is anything but pleasant. To rush swiftly along the Calea Victorie, then right on to the end of the Chaussée with the keen wind just nipping the face whilst the rest of the body is cosily enveloped in furs, is one of the most delightful experiences of the winter in Roumania.

During this season you must protect yourself from the severe cold. Sometimes it is so severe that men are to be seen with their moustaches frozen quite stiff. I think, however, that as a rule

Roumanians wear clothing in the winter which is quite too heavy, as it renders them much more sensitive to the cold. For instance, a man will wear over his extra warm winter clothes an enormous overcoat lined throughout with fur, and so heavy that it is a task to lift it. A fur cap on his head and fur-edged snow-boots complete the out-of-doors costume.

Ladies and children also wear very heavy fur-lined coats, and over the hat the inevitable " glouga," a pointed cap something in the style of a witch's cap, made of stout cloth and with long ends that one can wind round the neck and tie in a knot. The " glouga " is to protect the head and ears, and is sometimes even worn by gentlemen.

Christmas is a very pleasant time, and I always enjoyed it, even though it be the chronological misfortune of the country that Santa Claus arrives a fortnight after the date upon which we used to expect him at home. Some time before Christmas the boys belonging to the different church choirs parade the streets singing at every door much after the fashion of our own waits, and carrying a large banner in the shape of a star. As there is a small light placed behind this, it shows up well and is very effective in the dark streets. Naturally the musicians expect to receive largesse, and it is not often that they are disappointed, as Roumanians are very charitable and give readily. Christmas is observed chiefly as a religious holiday, the real fête being New Year's Eve. Then it is that the families who have children light up their Christmas tree and distribute the presents. Every visitor must have a little remembrance from the tree, no

matter how small. Punctually at midnight champagne is brought in and drunk to the accompaniment of much clinking of glasses and cries of "La mulţi an!" (A Happy New Year!), which resound on every side.

The houses are not decorated with holly as they are in England; indeed, holly is never seen there. The present Queen of Roumania tried to cultivate it in the park at Cotroceni, but without success. Mistletoe, however, is very abundant, the best kind growing on the fir-tree.

My delight was great one Christmas Eve (the English colony always kept their own Christmas) on arriving home to find a huge bunch of mistletoe, with its waxlike berries, placed in my room. It had been sent by Princess G——. It was a little attention prompted by a kind thought, and I appreciated it. The innate politeness of the Roumanians is constantly evidenced by similar acts of courtesy.

Roumanians as a rule are very kind and thoughtful for others, and their hospitality knows no bounds. As a Latin race their sympathies and affection naturally go out to the French, but my own observations convince me that their respect and esteem are given to the English more than to any other nation.

CHAPTER XXVI

Sinaia

Sinaia and its summer Court—Gay life in the Carpathians—Court ladies in national costume—Sinaia at various seasons—The monastery and the Queen's room there: she decorates it with caricatures of society ladies—A fête at the monastery—King Edward at Sinaia—Lord Roberts a guest there—The Crown Prince's residence—Princess Marie's "cuib" or "Crusoe" amongst the trees—Her sister, the Grand Duchess of Hesse—Little Princess Ella—A merry party in the woods—A tragedy recalled.

THIS lovely and fashionable resort is situated in the valley of the Prahova, and is surrounded by mountains, which present no very great difficulties of ascent to the ordinary mountaineer. Sinaia itself consists, apart from its villa residences, of a casino, a small concert-room, and a really fine bathing establishment. In the hotel gardens a military band plays three times a week; on the alternate days it is stationed in the forest, in the vicinity of a pretty little restaurant on the road leading up to the palace. On this spot the visitors delight to congregate and listen to the strains of the band. There is no lack of seats, as wooden benches and even tables are generously provided. To sit there inhaling the delicious perfume of the pines, brought out by the warm rays of the sun, sipping at the same time a glass of *ţucia* or other beverage, and lazily criticising the passers-by on the road below, is an important part of the daily life at Sinaia.

Sinaia is reached in about four hours by rail from Bucarest, and in one hour from the Hungarian frontier, and is of course a most fashionable resort. The Court goes there in summer to avoid the great heat in Bucarest. Pelesch, the royal palace, is a fine residence, built by the late King Carol. It is beautifully situated on an eminence backed by the pine-clad heights of the Carpathians, whilst at the foot flows the merry little river Pelesch, from which the palace derives its name.

The monastery at Sinaia is situated upon a high hill which is reached from the valley below by sloping walks. It is a very fine building, having been restored of late years, and is really worth seeing. At one side of the building is a courtyard, around which are the apartments allotted to the priests, as well as a few guest-chambers. Behind the courtyard there is a stretch of green, from which one has a beautiful view of the surrounding country. The road behind the monastery leads past Castle Pelesch and on up into the mountains. As one gradually ascends the incline, one admires the magnificent forest trees as well as the profusion of ferns and wild flowers, which are here seen in abundance. The river Pelesch rushes along on its way from the mountains, and as it descends it forms three lovely waterfalls. The road leads on up to the Carpathian peaks of Caraiman and Verful cu Dor, whence one can see the Balkan mountains on a clear day.

Before Castle Pelesch was built Carmen Sylva often took up her abode at the monastery. The room she inhabited is still shown to visitors, and it is most interesting to anyone who

has an extensive acquaintance with Roumanian society, as the walls are covered with pencil drawings done by the Queen, representing, on the whole very faithfully, the features of one well-known lady after another. It is really amusing to pick them out, as some have been caricatured and are not immediately recognisable.

St Marie is the patron saint of the monastery, so on that saint's day, the 15th August, the poor of the surrounding country are regaled by the Archimandrite and the priests. Large tables are placed in the courtyard, round which are seated the visitors. They are then served with *borsch*, a sour soup, in which float small pieces of meat, with *mamaliga* cheese, onions, and large flat loaves, the whole washed down with a mug of the thin red wine of the country. Each peasant receives a plate and mug, which he is at liberty to take with him on leaving. All the visitors then at Sinaia go up to watch the proceedings, and very interesting they seem to find it, as crowds are attracted every year.

Residence in Sinaia is sometimes prolonged till far into the autumn. Naturally a good deal of Court etiquette is left behind in Bucarest, with the result that the royal family as well as the members of the Court amuse themselves very well indeed. Tennis (golf has not yet reached Roumania), paper-hunts, and excursions into the Carpathians are among the distractions.

The late Queen, Carmen Sylva, and all the ladies of her Court invariably adopted the Roumanian costume when the Court was at Sinaia. This costume is very picturesque. The petticoat, of a light material, woven by the peasants, is em-

broidered at the bottom. A wide-sleeved blouse is also richly embroidered, and with it is worn a straight piece of embroidery falling from the waist to the edge of the petticoat. A double skirt, opening in front, shows this embroidered panel. The main part of the costume is completed by a sash wound many times round the waist.

If the wearer be a young girl, she wears a row of broad Turkish gold coins round her forehead (this represents her dowry) and a flower behind her ear. In the case of a married lady a veil is worn fastened to the head and falling to the waist. After a woman is married she is not supposed to show her hair, at any rate among the peasantry.

The custom of wearing Roumanian costume when in residence at Sinaia has, I regret to say, been abandoned since Queen Marie came to the throne.

No guest of the royal family can ever leave Roumania without paying a visit to beautiful Sinaia. The late King Edward visited it when he was Prince of Wales, and I was once shown an old photograph in which he figures standing erect on a rock with Prince Ferdinand at his side, whilst a little lower Carmen Sylva is seated, surrounded by the ladies of the Court. The photograph was taken during an excursion in the mountains. Lord Roberts also spent a few days at Sinaia. He came with his suite to announce to their Majesties the accession of King George. Before leaving, he most kindly received the few British residents who were then in Sinaia, the late Queen being also present and chatting most affably with everyone, as she could easily do, being so very proficient in the English language. Mrs Spender Clay (*née* Miss Astor) and

her brother Waldorf Astor have also been frequent visitors of Princess Marie.

The family of the Crown Prince and Princess did not live at Castle Pelesch in the lifetime of the late King. Their own residence was situated a short distance away. It was of the shooting-box style, built entirely of dark wood, surrounded by a nice roomy verandah. The gardens and terraces in front and at one side of the house were wonderfully pretty. At the other side one walked right into the forest. As their family increased, this house became too small, so another was built still nearer to Castle Pelesch. It is a fine house, much more pretentious than the " shooting-box," but to my mind not half so pretty. The old house is now reserved for visitors.

In the neighbouring forest Princess Marie, as she then was, had a " Crusoe " constructed. I understand that she adopted the idea from a celebrated arboreal restaurant in the Forest of Fontainebleau which is named after the castaway of Juan Fernandez.

A strong wooden platform was constructed amongst the trees at a considerable height from the ground, and upon this was built a house consisting of two rooms, a kitchen, and a salon.

The kitchen is fitted up with everything necessary for cooking simple dishes or preparing tea. The salon is very prettily furnished, and books in plenty, drawing and painting materials, etc., are always to be found there.

The Queen only takes her special friends to visit her " Crusoe," and a very charming retreat it is. The windows and open door command a most

beautiful view. Access to the " Crusoe " is gained by means of a ladder with wide steps, which is let down when required. When the visitors are safely ensconced in their leafy retreat the ladder is drawn up, and they remain there shut in on three sides by foliage and cut off from communication with the world below save by telegraph, for a wire connects it with the palace. Nothing disturbs the perfect calm and quiet at such a height, and many pleasant hours have been spent by her Royal Highness and a chosen few in that little nest. Nest is indeed the word, for that is the meaning of the Roumanian name " cuib " by which the retreat is generally known.

The Grand Duchess Cyril of Russia, sister to Princess Marie, was a frequent visitor at Sinaia. At the time of her last visit she was still Duchess of Hesse, as she divorced the Duke of Hesse some time later.

She was accompanied by her little daughter, a merry little soul, but not by any means to be compared with her cousins so far as looks were concerned. I often met the child playing about in the forest near the castle, attended by a nursemaid. Although so young, she was an expert horsewoman, and well do I remember one day meeting a riding party of three, the Grand Duchess, her little daughter, and Princess Elizabeth. The two children were in a merry mood, and as the way led past a group of cottages they had evidently made up their minds to " cut a dash." I heard one of them say, " Now let us go at full gallop," but the Grand Duchess nipped their aspirations in the bud, as I heard her reply, " You will do nothing of the kind, you will just go past quietly." I remembered that merry

party and the happy laughter floating back to me on the breeze when later I heard of the tragic fate of Princess Ella, and the memory caused the sad news to strike more sharply home to me. Perhaps in England the foul deed to which I refer did not excite so much sorrow, but to us who had known the child it was a terrible tragedy.

Little Princess Ella was on her way to Russia in company with her father, to visit the Czar and Czarina; they were met at a small frontier town by their Majesties. Tea was served here, but it appears that no one happened to partake of it but Princess Ella. Immediately after swallowing the tea she complained of feeling ill, and although medical help was at once available she succumbed a few hours later. Her mother was telegraphed for, but the child was already dead when she arrived. It was understood that the tragedy was the outcome of an anarchist plot directed against the life of the Czar. It was by the merest chance (if there be such a thing as chance) that neither his Majesty nor the Czarina felt inclined for tea.

One scarcely knows when Sinaia is at its best, whether in summer when the royal parterres and the gardens of the different villas are all a mass of colour, the brilliant sunshine lighting up the scene, and, beyond, the peaks of the Carpathians stretching far up into the sky; or in winter, when the ground is thickly carpeted with snow, and every branch and twig stands outlined against the sky. After a sharp frost, when the sun breaks through the clouds, lighting up the frozen branches and turning them into silver, the scene is fairy-like.

Sinaia is also not to be despised in autumn when

the foliage is beginning to change. It is a real pleasure to wander through the woods and to feast one's eyes on the different tints of the changing leaves. The dark green of the pines, mingling with the lighter green, yellow, and crimson of the other trees, makes a blend of colour that delights the eye.

For more than twenty years I spent a few pleasant weeks of each year at Sinaia, where I have frequently been a guest at the beautiful country home of the late Madame Take Jonescu, amongst others. I have visited the lovely place at every season of the year, and know it in all its varying moods.

CHAPTER XXVII

Franz d'Este and his morganatic wife at Sinaia—My recollection of him at Vienna—Society girls with cold feet—The German Crown Prince was popular at Bucarest—But he was only there a fortnight—The King and his "shadowers"—Predeal—The leap over the frontier—A little smuggling—A beautiful and historic road.

THE Archduke Franz d'Este and his morganatic wife, the Fürstin Hohenberg, whose murder at Serajevo by a Servian student was the ostensible reason for the outbreak of the Great War, visited Sinaia in the lifetime of the late King Carol and Queen Elizabeth. They were received there in a very private circle, no public reception being accorded them, as of course the Fürstin, not being of the same exalted rank as her husband, could not have taken her place at his side. When the Archduke went to the Spanish wedding as representative of the Emperor of Austria his wife accompanied him only to San Sebastian, and there awaited his return.

Franz d'Este was not a pleasant person, and when I was a girl in Vienna I heard many stories of his escapades and of those of his equally wild brother the Archduke Otto. The Emperor was constantly obliged to call them to account. Many of the stories were no doubt exaggerated, but I understand that the often-told tale of how Franz

d'Este stopped a funeral procession and leaped his horse over the bier was well authenticated.

I remember very well skating one afternoon at a place by the Stadt Park, near the Ring Strasse. Franz d'Este was amongst the skaters, and he was distributing his favours pretty impartially amongst the crowd of young society girls. They stood huddled in a crowd, and not one would move till Franz came to claim her. Poor things! They must have had cold feet, but I suppose they thought it worth while.

The German Crown Prince spent a fortnight in Bucarest some years ago, and I presume that he was also taken to Sinaia. Of that, however, I am not quite sure, as I was away at the time. Anyhow, I am certain of one thing, and that is, that he made himself most agreeable to the ladies of Bucarest, winning golden opinions on every side.

Germans are not liked by the Roumanians, but the Crown Prince was an exception. He admired the ladies of society very much, and was greatly taken by their toilet. I daresay he gave many a hint to his wife regarding her dress on his return from Roumania.

At the dances in the palace the Crown Prince never waited for a formal arrangement by the Master of Ceremonies. In the case of a young friend of mine, he simply took her by the hand when the music started and said, "Let us dance this together."

On taking leave of the Roumanian officers who had been attached to his suite, he presented each of them with a photograph of the German Emperor, simply saying, "My father wished me to give you

this." All this absence of formality delighted the Roumanians, who like to dispense with ceremony themselves. But of course we must remember that the German Crown Prince only stayed in Roumania for a fortnight, and since then his character seems to have developed in an extraordinary way.

The late King and Queen of Roumania liked to stay at Sinaia as long as they possibly could. King Carol's desire was to live as simply as possible and to stroll about the woods without any guard whatever. Of course, a guard could not be entirely dispensed with, but private detectives were employed to follow the King in his walks as unobtrusively as was possible. Poor men! I think they had a hard time of it trying to carry out their instructions. I met the King and Prince Ferdinand one day walking in the woods, and some distance behind followed two rather shabby-looking men. They behaved in such a suspicious way, taking cover behind every tree or bush if they thought the gentlemen were about to turn, that if I had not been aware of their identity I should have thought they had designs on the King. They were detectives who were really concerned for the King's safety, but they were obliged to be careful, as his Majesty was always very angry if one of them crossed his path.

The road from Sinaia to Predeal in the Carpathians is beautiful and full of interest. There is a gentle incline for a considerable part of the way, till the road finally reaches its culminating point at Predeal, on the frontier between Roumania and Transylvania.

Predeal is a pretty little village with a great many villas scattered about, as it is a favourite summer

resort for the inhabitants of Bucarest. It is surrounded by pine forests, and these, together with the health-giving air (Predeal is situated at the highest point of the Carpathians), attract a great many sufferers from chest complaints. I spent a summer once in Predeal, and enjoyed it very much. The village is of course Roumanian, but our villa happened to be built just a few yards over the boundary on Hungarian soil. The Hungarians were very anxious that people should settle on their side, therefore they gave special facilities for building purposes. To mark the boundary there was a deep ditch running from the forest high up behind our house right down to the road. This ditch was constantly patrolled by a Hungarian soldier, who sternly prohibited any crossing into Roumanian territory except by the legitimate means at the barrier on the road further down.

Now, as most of our friends lived on the Roumanian side, the fancy often seized us to pay them an evening visit. But to travel all the way down to the road was not to be thought of when the crossing of the ditch was so easy. Therefore we used to watch for the favourable moment when the soldier was up near the forest, take a flying leap across the ditch, and land safely on Roumanian territory before the sentinel could return. When he did arrive he could do no more than hurl threats after us, as he could not leave his post.

Crossing the boundary with forbidden commodities was always attended with a certain amount of risk. What an anxious moment when one was requested to come into the office, and how great was the pleasure afterwards when one was successful

in smuggling through certain articles! Lengths of muslin pinned in front under one's skirt, cakes of soap hidden in the hat, chocolate in the bag or under the saddle of one's bicycle, what a pleasure it was to get them through! The Customs officials may strongly suspect that something is hidden, but they must not touch or search the *person* unless they are certain. Should they do so and find nothing, it is then a punishable offence. We had a number of fowls which we had brought with us from Bucarest, but the grain to feed them had to be kept on the Roumanian side, as the duty on it was very high. Every time that the supply ran short we had to cross the boundary wearing cloaks or loose jackets. On returning, each person had a small parcel concealed under these garments, so the fowls had what they required and the Hungarians were none the wiser.

The road from Predeal down into the Hungarian plain is one of the most lovely I have ever seen. It begins at the summit of the mountain, gradually descending in lovely curves, with beautiful glimpses of the valley beneath. When one finally reaches the plain it is charming to look back at the heights from which one has come.

How often have I cycled down from Predeal to Kronstadt, enjoying to the full all the lovely scenery *en route*! I have made many enjoyable excursions in the surrounding mountains, and one of these particularly is in my memory as I write.

We started from Predeal one fine summer morning on foot, preceded by two lads carrying our basket of provisions. As we walked at a brisk pace down

the road, we had still time to admire the dancing shadows caused by the sun shining through the trees that thickly bounded the road on each side. After a walk of half an hour we struck off to the right, and, after crossing some upland meadows and ascending the steep mountain-side for some time, found ourselves at the opening of a rocky gorge. The gorge was so narrow that there was just enough space for one person at a time to pass along the footpath, made of rough boards. By many turns and twists and sudden little jumps from one platform to the next lower down, we managed, with a good deal of difficulty, to arrive in the valley beneath. The slight bruises that we had sustained in the descent were now speedily forgotten, and we greatly enjoyed our lunch, supplemented as it was by the wild raspberries and strawberries which were growing there in abundance. As our party was mostly composed of Britishers, the inevitable cup of tea had to be provided. A little spirit-lamp was placed in the most sheltered corner we could find, and set alight. Just as we were in hopes that all was going on well and that the water was near boiling-point, a sudden puff of wind came along and blew out the flame. Time after time this tantalising experience was repeated. At length one of the party, a clergyman, undertook the difficult task of getting the water boiled. To see him on his knees, anxiously shading the flame with his hat, his hands, his whole body, and softly ejaculating sundry remarks when the spiteful little puff of wind succeeded in getting in between and undoing all his work, offered a spectacle which helped to solace the others. I am sure if he had not been a clergyman he would have

said something wicked. However, in the event, we had to content ourselves with tea made of lukewarm water; and although the Roumanians of the party did not seem to mind, we Britishers decidedly disliked it.

When one returns in memory to the scene of so much pleasure and enjoyment, it becomes impossible to imagine the bloody struggle that recently was enacted there. That beautiful road leading up to Predeal was probably cut up by the German heavy guns, the splendid forest trees torn to splinters, and all the merry animal life scared away. It is sad to think of the beautiful village of Predeal being even temporarily in the hands of the enemy, and of the number of valiant Roumanians who there made the supreme sacrifice.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A delightful equestrian excursion—We leave Sinaia in order to witness the sunrise from Omul—Midnight in the forest, and the ghostly hours before the dawn—Gathering edelweiss whilst we await the sunrise—A glorious spectacle—The coveted province spread out before our eyes—An equestrian quadrille on the summit of Omul—The guest-house of the monastery—On the homeward way—We descend the Jeppi on foot and meet with unexpected difficulties—Danger follows upon danger—A dreadful night on a mountain peak—Excitement at Sinaia—Triumphant return of the "heroes" and "heroines."

A PARTY of us, twenty in number including guides, set out on horseback one evening from Sinaia in order to ascend the Omul and view the sunrise next morning. The moon was just then at the full, and, as our way led by a very steep pathway up the mountain, we could catch glimpses from time to time of Sinaia with its twinkling lights far below. About 1.30 a.m. we stopped to rest the horses, the guides (who were really only horse keepers) made a roaring fire, and we feasted royally on tea and cozonak.

It was sheer delight to sit there and drink in the pure mountain air, and the delight was enhanced by the eerie feeling induced by the solemnity of the hour (when it is said we are nearest the unseen), and by the awe-inspiring influences of the vast silent forest which surrounded us on every side. After a time we broke the spell, and songs and jests went

merrily round. We were loth to resume our journey, but we knew that the sun would not wait for us, so the order to march was at last reluctantly given. The guides started to gather in our horses, which had been hobbled near at hand, but mine could not be found. Search was made in every direction, but all in vain—the horse was not to be found. At length one of the gentlemen of the party kindly offered to lend me his mount with the proviso that it should be returned to him when mine was recovered, as his was such a fast trotter. To this I willingly agreed, so off we started again, leaving a guide to recover the lost horse, which I may at once say he did later on. Just at 3 a.m. we arrived at the summit of the Omul, the highest peak in the Carpathians. I felt cold at such a height, although I was well wrapped up in a fur coat. Until his majesty the sun deigned to make his appearance we occupied ourselves in gathering edelweiss, which grew there profusely. It is very highly prized, chiefly I think because of its inaccessibility, growing as it does only at such altitudes; but to my mind it is by no means a pretty flower. Indeed, edelweiss always suggests to me flowers cut out of a piece of grey flannel.

As the supreme moment drew near for the rising of the sun, we were enjoined to fix our eyes on a certain bank of grey cloud, and not to lose sight of it for a single instant. We obeyed, and in a few seconds a tiny crimson line appeared above the bank of cloud. This line gradually grew broader and broader as the sun rose higher, giving one the impression that some great being was behind it pushing it further and further up. Finally, the

glorious sun in all his beauty shook himself free from the cloud trammels and flooded the surrounding peaks with radiant light.

The view from the Omul is altogether glorious. The whole province of Transylvania with its lovely valleys, lakes, and winding streams is spread out before one's eyes—that province so long coveted by the Roumanians, which they have now justly secured for their own.

After a slight refreshment, for which the keen mountain air had given us an appetite, we again mounted our horses in order to proceed to the monastery at which we were to dine. Again one of the horses was missing (this very often happens on these excursions), so, whilst waiting till the guide found it, the rest of us formed up on horseback to go through a quadrille. These country horses are very wiry and are splendid for travelling in the mountains, but graceful they are not. Their awkward movements, as we tried to induce them to go forward, then to retire, were so comical that we could scarcely retain our seats, we laughed so much.

When the missing pony was at last found, and we had calmed down a little, we resumed our journey. Some stiff climbing, a good gallop over undulating country, the fording of a few shallow rivers (nearly all the rivers in Roumania are shallow), and we arrived at our destination. How glad we were to bathe hands and faces in the little brook that babbled along through the fields, then to rest ourselves luxuriously on the wide verandah of the guest-house, knowing that pretty soon our appetites would be satisfied with the simple fare of the monks !

As visitors are only expected during the summer months, the accommodation is of the most primitive kind. A tolerably large room is given up to the guests, well furnished with plenty of hay, in which to pass the night. Ladies sleep at one end, gentlemen at the other; and really, after a day's hard riding one sleeps very well amongst the hay, and is even thankful to have it. On this particular occasion, however, we only remained for dinner, which was served on rough wooden tables (minus tablecloths), whilst we sat round on equally rough wooden benches. The fare was simple, but we enjoyed it thoroughly. The inevitable *mamaliga*, sour cabbage, eggs and *yaort*, a kind of thick preserved milk, formed the principal dishes of the repast. After many expressions of our grateful thanks to the monks who had so kindly entertained us, and after offering a trifling gift to the church, we started on the return journey, hoping to arrive in Sinaia about 7 o'clock p.m.

But man proposes, God disposes. The old lesson was taught us again. It had been decided by the gentleman in charge of the expedition (who claimed to have an intimate acquaintance with the mountains) that we should descend the Jeppi on foot, and so, after two or three hours' ride from the monastery, we dismounted, and the horses were led back by another route. Two of our so-called guides came with us to help us in the descent, but what a descent! We had first to cross a grassy slope in order to reach a spur of the mountain from which the real descent began. The short grass had been made so slippery by the heat of the sun that it was with great difficulty we could keep our feet; indeed, at one time some of

us were reduced to crawling upon our hands and knees. From the edge of this grassy slope there was a sheer descent of very many feet. A false step would have meant, if not actual death, certainly a broken limb.

Our relief was great when the dangerous stage of our journey was passed (as we thought) and we arrived on the peak of the mountain for which we had been aiming. But what was our horror to find that our situation was as bad as before, if not worse! Imagine twenty people crowded together on an outstanding spur of the mountain, that terrible grassy slope behind us, and before us even worse conditions. At the first glance I thought it would be a sheer impossibility to descend on foot, and that nothing but a balloon could rescue us from the situation if we refused to return as we had come. From where we stood the mountain seemed to fall away directly beneath us, nothing intervening between us and the beginning of the wooded slopes far below but huge boulders that it seemed utterly impossible to get over or get around. What were we to do? After much discussion, it was decided that one of the gentlemen should act as pioneer and discover if the descent was practicable. He was to hail us if he reached the forest in safety. Mr B——, who had a reputation for athletics to sustain, was obviously the man for the task, and he set off willingly, our fears for his safety being perhaps intensified by our anxiety for our own.

After what seemed an interminable time, a cheery cry reached us from amongst the distant trees, and no further time was lost in arranging our own departure. We went—as the animals are said to have entered

the Ark—two by two, in this case a lady and a gentleman together. A considerable distance was maintained between each couple, as the danger from displaced boulders was great. It was a horribly difficult and a really dangerous descent, and it took a long time for us all to reach the head of the Jeppi in safety. But so far from our troubles being over, it seemed as though they had only just begun. The darkness was so great on the wooded mountain that it would have been highly dangerous to even attempt to continue our way without more guides. The moon was just at the full, but no ray of light penetrated the thick foliage by which we were surrounded. To add to our troubles, one of the ladies of the party lost the use of her limbs through sheer fright; she could literally not stand on her feet. In this dilemma it was decided that one of our guides should descend to Poiana Ţapuliu, the nearest village, and send up more guides and a horse. Our situation was far from enviable, as we huddled together against a shelving bank at the foot of which ran the narrow pathway leading to the valley below. We were afraid to move, enveloped as we were in thick darkness, and having been warned that a sheer descent of unknown depth lay at the other side of the path. As the time dragged slowly on, we wondered what the people in Sinaia were thinking about us. Some of the livelier spirits tried to cheer up the party with song, but without much success. One restless young fellow would insist on moving about on the narrow pathway, to the terror of his sister, and indeed of us all, as we feared he would stumble in the darkness and fall over the precipice. Finally, to our great delight, voices were

heard in the distance and lights began to twinkle. It was the guides who had come to rescue us, each one with a blazing torch.

It was with great difficulty that the order of descent could be arranged, as so little space was available. However, at length the lady who was incapacitated was safely seated in the saddle, with a guide to lead the horse; the other members of the party, each one with a guide to lean on, fell in behind, and we slowly began the descent. What a journey that was! Shall I ever forget it? Stumbling over the thick undergrowth, slipping on patches of frozen snow, only kept from falling and rolling down the mountain by a frenzied grip on the guide's arm: it was a wonder that no further accident happened. But none did, and eventually we all arrived safe and sound at the base of the mountain, there to be received like so many heroes and heroines. The whole population of Poiana Ţapuliu was astir, bonfires had been lighted, and carriages were in waiting to drive us back to Sinaia.

Instead of reaching there at 7 p.m. as had been intended, we arrived between 1 and 2 a.m. The excitement was great; all sorts of rumours had been afloat as to what had happened to us when we did not appear at the hour appointed. As a friend told me afterwards, the road between Sinaia and Poiana Ţapuliu had never been so animated—carriages passing to and fro, cyclists and foot-passengers, all anxious for news of the missing party. Sinaia is a small place, and such long excursions in the mountain are of rare occurrence; and besides, the members of the party belonged to the best-known families in Roumania. Fortunately, there were no bad results

from our expedition. Even the lady who suffered from temporary disablement was quite restored to health after a few days' rest. It was the principal guide who came in for the greatest amount of blame, as it was considered by expert mountaineers a very risky proceeding indeed to bring ladies down by the Jeppi.

None of us were likely to forget our experience that night; but as nothing very untoward happened, we were able to laugh about it all later on.

Since then I have made many excursions in the Carpathians: twice have I been on the Omul, several times on the Caraiman (where we were overtaken once on the summit by a snowstorm and were able to pelt each other with snowballs), but never have I had such an adventure as that of the Jeppi.

Before leaving the subject of the Omul, which, by the way, means "The Man," I shall briefly relate the legend connected with it. It appears that a shepherd called Marco had the temerity to aspire to the hand of his master's daughter. As he was a good, faithful fellow, and the daughter herself favoured his suit, the master agreed to give his consent to the marriage on condition that the shepherd would ascend the Omul and there spend the winter. The shepherd at once consented, and at the beginning of winter he made all his preparations for a long absence. He left his flocks in the care of his friends in Sinaia, then put into his knapsack some maize, cheese, and a few bottles of *țuica*. When all his arrangements were made, he went to the monastery to burn a candle to St Dimitri and to kiss the holy ikons, after which he set out to make the ascent of the Omul, accompanied only by his dog. As he

neared the summit snow began to fall heavily, but still he hurried on. At last the goal was reached and he found himself on the lofty summit. There was no sign of animal life—the bears and other animals had all sought the warmer air of the regions below.

Although no shelter was to be had on the summit of the rock, still, as the legend runs, the man and dog survived throughout the bitter winter.

With the coming of spring, the young shepherds, Marco's companions, decided to climb to the summit of the mountain and discover how he had fared. Very joyously they set out, each one with his primitive instrument of music. As they approached the summit their delight was great on seeing the dog run to meet them, but alas! there was no sign of the dog's master.

When the summit was gained, however, they caught sight of Marco standing on a rock, living, breathing, but incapable of movement. His companions called him by name. He recognised them and strove to approach them, but his limbs failed him and he fell to the base of the rock on which he had been standing. When his friends reached the spot they stood sorrowfully around him. He spoke but a word to them, and then died.

On the very spot on which he died his friends made his grave. A cross was erected to his memory, and anyone who takes the trouble to ascend the Omul may still see the remains of it.

CHAPTER XXIX

Cholera in Russia—I hurry back to Roumania—I am put in quarantine on the frontier and liberally disinfected—The soldier guard aims his gun at me—My Jewish room-mate and her obtrusive husband—She plays "Patience" whilst he prays and expectorates—I get my release and send a military expedition in search of a mirror—Miss R—— tries to escape from Russia—Her companion, a German engineer, develops cholera—The terrified peasants place them together in an empty cottage—The German dies—She finds, when after a terrifying experience she reaches Bucarest, her hair is snow-white.

AS is pretty well known, cholera has never yet been entirely stamped out of Russia. Roumanians are naturally on the alert lest the dread disease should be introduced into their country, and, thanks to the excellent arrangements made by them on the different frontiers, cholera has never yet succeeded in establishing itself on their side. I happened to be in Russia one autumn when the cholera was pretty bad. Frightful tales were brought in as to what was taking place in the next village—"people dying by the score, numbers being buried in one common grave," and so forth. Whether they were true or not, these stories frightened me so that I determined to leave at once and try to re-enter Roumania. The journey through Russia was anything but pleasant, all the railway carriages reeking of disinfectants. On arriving at the Roumanian frontier, the train was stopped on the bridge over the Pruth close to the little village of Ungheni.

We were received by the doctor and a number of officials, one of whom at once demanded the keys of our trunks. Everything was pushed into an enormous stove, and steamed there for fully twenty minutes. We were then conducted to our apartments. Four or five peasant cottages had been cleared of their inhabitants, and were placed at the disposal of the travellers. I shared one of the rooms with a lady and her children. Every morning a soldier entered with a bottle (*vaporisateur*) of disinfectant and liberally besprinkled us and our clothes with it; so thoroughly was it done that my clothes reeked of the stuff for months afterwards. Towards mid-day another soldier presented himself with the menu from the station restaurant. Not knowing Roumanian very well then, I had no choice but to point to some dish on the menu; and whether it were fish, flesh, or fowl, it had to be eaten. If I had refused it and chosen another dish, I might have fared still worse.

We were guarded by soldiers and attended by soldiers. Indeed, so very strictly were we guarded that, one day going a few paces beyond the range marked out for us, a sentinel actually aimed his gun at me. After that, thinking discretion the better part of valour, I overstepped the limit no more. I was obliged to stay in quarantine for five days, paying two francs a night for my bed, and providing myself with food also. The lady who shared my room at the beginning left after two days, and her place was taken by a Jewess who arrived from Russia with her husband. They were a most amusing couple. She sat on her bed all day playing at "Patience." He in the corner of the room, with a

hand-towel over his shoulders in lieu of a praying shawl, recited the prayers for the day, every now and then turning to expectorate, and most probably calling down blessings on the Christians. The husband was lodged in an adjacent room with another traveller, but was constantly coming in to ours to visit his wife. One morning he came at such an early hour that I had not finished dressing. I was very angry, but controlled myself as well as I could. After a few minutes he went back to his own apartment to fetch something, only to return almost directly. But I had been quicker than he. In those few moments I had barricaded the door. His disgust was great when he found he could not get in, and quite plainly I could see his form silhouetted on the white window-blind as he took his revenge by putting his fingers to his nose. His wife looked stolidly on at all this byplay, but made no remark. She made no attempt whatever to interfere with me; so I was free to dress at my leisure, and then, and not till then, did I open the door. At the next visit of the doctor I complained to him about the too frequent visits of the Jew, so he promised that I should not be annoyed again.

When finally the day arrived that I was free to continue my journey, I felt that I should like to look into a mirror before setting off. But no such thing was to be had in any of the houses. Finally, after diligent inquiries prosecuted through the soldiers, I learned that two gentlemen who occupied a little cottage not far off were the lucky possessors of such an article. The soldier was at once despatched with a polite request for the loan of the mirror. It was at once granted, so I was able to see how I looked

after five days' quarantine. Soldiers accompanied us to the station, and saw us safely into the train ; but our passports were not restored to us till we had arrived at the town of Jassy *en route* for Bucarest.

On one of the frequent occasions when cholera became epidemic in Russia, a young English governess with whom I had some acquaintance met with one of the most tragical experiences I have ever heard of.

Miss R—— accepted a holiday engagement with a family in Russia at some distance from the border, and as it was her first visit to that country she looked forward to it with the greatest interest and pleasure. For a time all went well, but at length cholera broke out in the neighbourhood and spread alarmingly. Poor Miss R—— was terribly frightened. She was the only foreigner in the place with the exception of a German engineer who was engaged on some important work in the district, and who, she soon found, shared her nervousness. The two decided to leave, but the family with whom she was living thought that such a course would be a very foolish one, and sought to dissuade her from it.

Finding her still determined, her employers placed practical obstacles in the way. The place was situated very many miles from the nearest railway station, and they refused to supply her with a carriage or a vehicle of any sort. The German was for a time no more successful, but at length he did obtain a *karutza*, and the two set out upon a journey that was destined to have a ghastly termination.

They had scarcely reached the first village when

the German fell ill, his symptoms clearly indicating cholera. Overcome with horror, Miss R—— abandoned any attempt to proceed to the station, still many miles away, and sought help in the village. It was a practically hopeless quest. She knew no word of the language, and the villagers, terrified of the cholera, would have nothing to do with her or her sick companion. The latter knew a little Russian, and at length in response to his solicitations the two were shown to an empty cottage on the outskirts of the village, and here they took up their quarters. What a situation for a young English girl! Left in a remote Russian village, alone, save for the companionship of a sick stranger of another race, and without the means of making known her wants even if the villagers had been able or willing to assist her!

Food and water were thrust through the window, but no other help whatever could be obtained. There was no doctor in the place, and she had no means of even appealing to her late employers. Faced by this terrible situation, Miss R—— braced herself to meet it and acted as an Englishwoman might be expected to act. She did her best for the German engineer, but the poor man, lacking medical attention or even drugs or restoratives of the simplest kind, was doomed from the first. He rapidly grew worse, and after a day and a night of terrible suffering, which his unhappy attendant could do little to mitigate, he died.

Miss R——'s situation, alone with the dead body, was scarcely better than it had been before, and she became resigned to the worst that could befall, feeling assured that the villagers would not help.

What was her surprise, however, when, upon finding out that her companion was dead, they so overcame their fears as to take the body away and bury it!

Two days later—having apparently conferred amongst themselves in the meantime—they brought a *karutza* to the door and invited her by signs to enter it. She was then driven to the railway station, and eventually reached Bucarest in safety. When she encountered her friends there they uttered exclamations of surprise and even of horror, for the hair of the young girl had turned completely white.

It was the greatest mercy that Miss R—— succeeded in getting through to Roumania in safety, as the Russian peasants often become quite crazy when cholera is about. They accuse the doctors of fostering the disease for their own ends, and often refuse to have their sick attended to. In one district they worked themselves up to such a pitch of madness that they attacked a hospital, dragged the patients out of bed, forced them to return to their own homes, and completely put to rout both doctors and nurses. Needless to say, numbers of deaths occurred in consequence of these terrible acts. Cholera is never really stamped out in Russia; it is usually hanging about the remote villages, and it takes toll of a certain number of lives every year.

CHAPTER XXX

The beggars of Bucarest—A plan that failed—Was it inspired by Count Rumford's Munich scheme ?—Where the beggars spend their holidays—No lack of charity—Footless, and yet wanted boots—Influence of priests and beggars on the currency—A stroll through the market—Servians as market gardeners—An exhibition in Bucarest—Princess Marie and the water-chute—Excessive gambling—The Moşi—English "stupidity"—Nothing to buy in London—Bucarest to London *via* the North Sea and Edinburgh—Jefferson Bricks in Bucarest.

BEGGARS form a prominent feature of life in the East; and Roumania being considered the end of Europe and the beginning of Asia, the country is not lacking in this characteristic. Beggars swarm in the streets, and are of all kinds. There is the familiar beggar who has his accustomed pitch; the beggar who has a wound to exhibit; the beggar who is, or feigns to be, a bit crazy, and twirls himself singing all down the street. He is, however, always sensible enough to clutch the coin one offers him.

The practice of begging is winked at by the authorities, as otherwise they would not know what to do with the beggars. I remember once there was a change of Government, and sweeping reforms were going to be made by the incoming party. The first reform was to be the clearance of beggars from the streets. A notice was issued that all beggars were to assemble at the police stations in their respective

districts on a certain day. This was done, and great hopes were entertained that at last we should be rid of this nuisance. Next day we eagerly searched the newspapers for an account of the proceedings, and how disappointed we felt, and how futile it all seemed, when we found that it closed with the words, "The beggars were then dismissed, as no one knew what to do with them"!

I have a strong impression that the plan was inspired by some recollection of the work done so successfully in Munich by that most remarkable of men, Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, the English-American soldier, statesman, and scholar, from whom the famous *englischen Garten* derived its name (one wonders if it bears it still).

The "rounding-up" idea, although it was not planned with the genius of a Rumford, nor carried out with the success which rewarded that great man's efforts, was recognised as having something practical about it, and it remains a cherished practice of the Bucarest police. Before a fête-day, such as the anniversary of the coronation, the police round up every suspected person, pickpockets, etc., and put them safely under lock and key till the festivities are over; and then they are set at liberty again.

Although the authorities accept no responsibility in regard to beggars, still there are many private societies formed to help them. One such society issues little books consisting of ten pages. Any charitably disposed person can buy a book for a franc and then distribute the leaves as he wishes. One page entitles the beggar to a basin of soup and a piece of bread. On presenting two pages he is entitled to a piece of meat. It is a capital plan, as

one feels that one is really feeding the hungry (if hungry they be) and yet not giving them money to waste on other things.

Roumanians are very charitable, and will seldom refuse a beggar. That is probably why there are so many. As they are not used to refusals, they are very insistent, and sometimes I have had a beggar follow me for quite a long distance, droning out his customary formula, till losing patience I have threatened him with the police. One poor little girl always excited my pity—a child of about eleven or twelve. She had lost both feet in an accident, but she was such a bright, cheery little soul that it was a pleasure to see her. She was always carried to a certain corner by a big boy, who then retired and watched over her from a distance. I always gave her a small coin, for which she was most grateful; but one day she highly amused me with the request, "Do please give me a pair of boots." Seeing that she had no feet, I was at a loss to understand what use the boots would be to her, but I could get no enlightenment from her, only a smile and a repetition of the request, "Please, a pair of boots."

The coins used in Roumania are *lei* and *bani*, the equivalents of francs and centimes. The smallest nickel coin is five centimes. Several attempts have been made to introduce one- and two-centime coins, but after a time they have invariably disappeared from the currency—withdrawn, as I have been told, for very obvious reasons by the priests and the beggars.

It is very pleasant to stroll through the market on a fine summer morning. On all sides there is a wild riot of colour which delights the eye. There are the

fruit stalls piled with oranges, pomegranates, dates, green grapes of the native variety, and grapes of light amber hue from Constantinople. Scarcely less effective are the vegetable stalls with their bright-red tomatoes affording a brilliant contrast to the fresh greens of cauliflower and cabbage. Here, too, are radishes and *pimonts*. Then there are stalls with mushrooms of all varieties, stalls with cheeses, stalls with golden butter and white and brown eggs, and every here and there are mounds of melons. Some of the melons are of the yellow variety, but there are also plenty of water melons, with one here and there cut open to display the luscious pink interior.

Roumanians do not grow all the vegetables that fill the market—often they are largely due to the labour and care of foreigners. I stayed for some weeks near Pitesti, a small country town, in the neighbourhood of which a number of Servians came to settle for the summer months. They rented a large plot of ground and grew vegetables of all kinds. They were most industrious and looked well after their produce. When the melons were ripening they even took it in turns to sit up and watch all night, so that would-be thieves might have no opportunity of helping themselves. Very often through the night we were startled by a rifle-shot. It was only the Servian on guard who fired from time to time to advertise his wakefulness. Two or three times a week a big waggon was loaded with produce and driven for miles round the country, even to Sinaia and beyond. Their produce was eagerly bought, as vegetables are not too abundant, especially in these summer resorts. When the

market gardeners were quite sold out they retired to Servia with their profits, where they remained till next season. It must have been a profitable enterprise, as fifteen Servians were engaged in it at the place I speak of.

The exhibition that was held in Bucarest some years ago was very creditable to the country, seeing that it was the first that had ever taken place. All the ordinary produce of the country was exhibited—cereals, fruit, cheese and butter, huge blocks of rock-salt, etc. The home industries of the peasantry—carpets, Roumanian costumes, embroidery, pillow-lace and fine lace (the making of the latter being taught in the schools)—formed perhaps the most interesting feature. A miniature crèche was also shown, fitted with all modern appliances for the little ones. Although the exhibition was "International," the exhibits were mainly Roumanian. Some neighbouring countries took the opportunity of showing their wares, and Germany was represented by a display of automatic pianos.

Servia and Bulgaria sent embroidery, carpets, also broad leather waist-bands in which folk put their money. The colours employed in the carpets were rather crude, but the work was very good.

One of the most effective exhibits, and that which showed the greatest taste in its arrangement, was the hall in which the Roumanian industry of cigar and cigarette making was shown. The entire hall, a fairly large one, was inlaid with cigars and cigarettes arranged in various fanciful designs. Small stacks of cigars tied with the Roumanian colours were placed at intervals down the middle of the hall, whilst gaily-decorated boxes of cigarettes of all

sizes formed a sort of dado round the wall. A number of young girls, dressed in Roumanian costumes, busily engaged in the making of cigarettes, packing the boxes, etc., completed a picture that would strike the eye of an artist.

Elsewhere was an interesting exhibition showing the improvement in the treatment of prisoners as contrasted with that of former times. The old cell was small and badly lighted, with grimy walls and low ceiling; the modern cell, though also small, had a high ceiling, a good-sized window letting in plenty of light and air, and whitewashed walls, making altogether a neat, clean appearance. The clothing of the prisoners had also undergone a change for the better, as was shown in the figures in each cell. Close by was the hall in which work done by prisoners was on view. Well-made carpets, matting of cocoa-nut fibre, fancy articles carved out of wood, all testified to the ingenuity of the prisoners.

The grounds of the exhibition were beautifully laid out, flowers growing everywhere in profusion; but sufficient space was reserved for the various amusements, the favourite one being the water-chute. This form of diversion was popular with everyone, but more especially with the present Queen, who took great delight in it. Several times she made the trip alone—that is, only with the man in charge—as the plunge into the water was so much more exciting when the boat was not heavily laden. Unfortunately, during the summer a quarrel arose between the Americans in charge of the water-chute and the exhibition authorities. Whatever may have been the cause of the dispute, the result

was that the Americans were obliged to leave the exhibition, the management of the "chute" being given to a Roumanian company.

Rumours were rife that jealousy of the Americans' "takings" was at the bottom of the trouble. Whether that was so or not, I cannot say.

Gaming-tables were numerous, at which roulette, trente-et-un, etc., were played; but stakes were so high, and the sums of money that changed hands so enormous, that the police were obliged to intervene and forbid all gambling in the exhibition.

It was most enjoyable to lounge away an afternoon in the lovely grounds, listening to the strains of the string band or the varied music of the *lautare*; and when the exhibition was finally closed it was greatly missed, as Bucarest is rather wanting in outdoor amusements in summer.

The Moşi

The Moşi, or great annual fair, which is held in the month of May, probably embraces all the usual features of fairs the world over. Its special distinctions are that it assumes the importance of a national exhibition, and that the fair grounds, which occupy a vast area on the outskirts of Bucarest, are always visited by royalty.

The Moşi generally lasts for ten days, and during that time the traffic in the Calea Moşilor, which leads to the grounds, is the scene by day and night of a practically continuous procession which not only includes every kind of noise and extravagance incidental to our Derby Day, but can also boast of many picturesque features unknown in the progress to the classic race. The residents in Calea

Moşilor deserve and receive sympathy during this stirring time.

For the peasants the Moşi is a great national festival, and, attired in their gay costumes, and driving in ox-waggons canopied with boughs of green, they add much to the picturesqueness of these varied scenes.

The first Thursday of the Moşi is the great day when royalty honours the scene with its presence. Both Carmen Sylva and the present Queen, with their characteristic kindness of heart, always " did " the show thoroughly, and by the extent and variety of their purchases gladdened the hearts of an incredible number of stall-holders.

Is there a fair anywhere in the world without gingerbread ? I remember it in this connection in my native Ireland, and I have met it at fairs in many parts of Europe since. The Moşi adheres to the gingerbread tradition, and displays the popular delicacy (if it be a delicacy) in every conceivable variety. It is an unwritten law that no one, high or low, must return from the fair gingerbreadless.

Of course you may eat what you like at the Moşi, but the local connoisseur knows well that the true gastronomical feature of the fair is an excellent small garlic sausage which I know Queen Marie tried on at least one occasion and commended very highly.

I feel a slight consciousness of disloyalty now when I acknowledge that the Turkish stalls particularly attracted me. The beautifully fine embroidery, with small squares worked in gold and silver thread, the gorgeous carpets, the wide-sleeved

blouses of delicate texture, richly embroidered in silk, the quaintly decorated pipes with beaded stems, and many other attractive articles of Ottoman origin, afforded opportunities for "fairings" of quite distinctive character.

In various country districts fairs are held at stated seasons of the year. At Campulung, where I once spent the month of July, I was delighted to watch the peasant girls going to the fair dressed in all the finery of their national costume, many of them wearing curious billy-cock hats, and all with neat shoes and stockings.

There was a bench opposite to our house, and here the girls on returning from the fair always sat down and divested themselves of their fine shoes and stockings, which they carefully wrapped up in paper, proceeding on their way both light of heart and light of foot.

It is all very well to describe and criticise a country one visits, but it is also amusing to hear the criticisms of one's own country and people from those who have visited it for the first time. I was gravely informed once by a gentleman who had been in London for a few weeks, and who spoke no English, that the English were "very stupid." Asked to be a little more explicit, he informed me that when he wished to visit the docks of London he experienced the greatest difficulty in making anyone understand where he wanted to go. He stopped a cab and said to the cabman, "Promenade, dock," but cabby shook his head and did not understand. He then spoke louder, and a crowd began to assemble. Again and again he said "Promenade, dock," but still no one understood. At last a

policeman put him into the cab and drove with him to the nearest big hotel, where the mystery was explained. "But," the gentleman asked me, "why did they not understand? Promenade is the same word in English as in French, and dock is dock."

A lady visited London with her husband for the first time. They had rooms at the Hotel Cecil, and were very much interested in seeing the sights, but the complaint of the lady was, "Oh, the shops are not up to much; there was absolutely nothing to buy." The remark rather staggered me for a moment; then I ventured to name some of the big shops in Oxford Street and Regent Street. It was all of no use: she still persisted in her assertion. She had been in Paris shortly before, where she was tempted to buy at every step; but in London, "No, there was nothing to buy!"

Another lady and gentleman whom I knew started with their son on a visit to Norway. They had no idea what a sea voyage was like, and after being buffeted about in the North Sea for a day and a night, they much wished to be put on shore again. Although the full passage-money had been paid, the captain agreed to land them at Leith and to refund part of the money (at which they were very much astonished). For a time they made their head-quarters at Edinburgh, visiting the Trossachs and the surrounding country. Their admiration for Scotland was unbounded, more especially for Edinburgh, with which beautiful city they were charmed. Norway could not be more beautiful, they thought; they had lost nothing whatever by their change of plans. With occasional stoppages, the travellers made their way to London. The size of the metro-

polis, the traffic and the order with which it was controlled, the numerous parks, all excited their wonder and admiration; but still London did not charm them as Edinburgh had done.

I was once at an evening party in Bucarest where some Roumanian current events were being discussed. They were by no means matters of importance. Suddenly a lady turned to me and asked, "What do the English say about it?" I was rather embarrassed for a reply, but at last managed to suggest that perhaps they knew nothing of the affair. The lady was highly indignant. "We," said she, "know all that goes on in England and France, but the people there never seem to know anything of us." I pleaded guilty on their behalf, and remembered Jefferson Brick and his friends.

CHAPTER XXXI

Roumania's early history—Michael the Brave—Stephen the Great—A Spartan mother—Brancovan's noble efforts bring about his end—Oppression promotes union—Greek extortion—Russia and Turkey—The Westernising of Roumania—The Treaty of Paris—The European Commission—The new State of Roumania—Prince Cuza and his fall—The siege of Plevna—Roumania's present aims.

I HAD been some time resident in Roumania before I made any study of the history of the country and its people. I found authentic material very difficult to obtain, and had continually to reconstruct the information I assimilated.

Roumanian history did not attract me until I came to know and appreciate the people; and if I have (as I sincerely hope is the case) enabled my readers to share my interest in some degree, I now owe it to them to give some slight historical account of our allies and of the land which they inhabit. Indeed, it is necessary to know something of the history of the country before we can appreciate the causes which were the determining factors of Roumania's participation in the war. It is a country with a future full of hope and promise, and it deserves to be better known than it is.

Roumania was, as its name implies, a colony of ancient Rome. It has been suggested that it was a penal colony, but of this there is certainly no

authentic proof. Many Roumanians hold the belief that they are, as a people, descended from the Roman colonists of the time of Trajan, but those of them who are versed in history do not by any means make a definite claim to this effect.

Before the Roman epoch very little indeed is known of the country, and the scanty historical accounts concerning it are conflicting. With the thirteenth century begins the authentic history of the two principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, but it is by no means the history of a united people. These two principalities developed on distinct lines, and each had its separate annals.

Later on, as they fell under the dominion of the Turk, a more uniform system of administration was adopted, native princes governing in both, but always subject to and under the control of the Porte. Of these native princes the most important were Michael the Brave, Stephen the Great, and Constantine Brancovan.

On the Boulevard in Bucarest there stands a fine bronze equestrian statue of Michael the Brave, Prince of Wallachia. He it was who in concert with the then Prince of Moldavia partially freed the country from the Turks. His plans for the aggrandisement of his country succeeded so well that he invaded Transylvania, seized the reins of government, and secured his proclamation as prince of that province. Transylvania was afterwards conquered by the Hungarians, and ever since it has been the ardent wish of every Roumanian to regain this desirable territory.

After the death of Michael, the Turks gradually regained their old power over the country, a succes-

sion of princes reigning over it who were still obliged to buy their appointment at Constantinople.

Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia, was also a man of great courage and resource. In one of his campaigns against the Turks his army at first was forced to give way, and he is said to have fled to his own castle for refuge. Upon his demand for admission, a lattice opened and his mother appeared. She, like the Spartan mother of old, refused to admit him, seeing he came not as conqueror but conquered.

Her words animated both him and his followers to such a degree that they resolved to die rather than yield. They marched once more against the foe, and defeated them completely, forcing them to recross the Danube.

Constantine Brancovan, Prince of Wallachia, considerably furthered the internal well-being of the country, which had never been so prosperous as during his reign. But this prosperity, becoming known at Constantinople, only increased the exactions of the Turks. Notwithstanding that all the demands were punctually met, the Sultan thought that Brancovan was becoming too powerful, and therefore an envoy was sent to Bucarest with instructions to depose him. The Prince was conducted to Constantinople and quietly beheaded, and after his execution the Turks introduced a new system. The line of national princes ceased. Those who were now appointed were mostly Greeks, the office being sold to the highest bidder.

Hereupon ensued a period of grinding oppression, the Greeks squeezing as much as they could out of the peasantry, the consequence being that numbers

of them emigrated. By degrees the two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia came to recognise the need for a closer union in face of the common foe.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century the Russo-Turkish war took place, at which time Austria profited by the situation to arrange with both parties for the cession of Bukovina, a richly wooded province of Moldavia. At the conclusion of peace Russia restored all the Danubian principalities to the Sultan, but with certain stipulations in favour of Wallachia and Moldavia. The treaty, however, was shortly afterwards violated by the Turks, who recommenced their old system of extortion, till, in 1802, Russia once more asserted her treaty rights in favour of the oppressed inhabitants. It was at this time that the Turks ceded Bessarabia, a fertile province of Moldavia, to the Czar.

Although these arrangements were made with the Turks, the ostensible rulers of the two principalities, Russian influence still seems to have been predominant. Indeed, until the beginning of last century the Russian consul at Bucarest was all-powerful. The revolutionary movement of '48 extended even to the two principalities—their real object being the overthrow of Russian influence. In order to quell the disturbance Russian troops entered the country, whereupon the reigning princes fled to Vienna, leaving the government to their ministers. Great suffering was at this time inflicted on the inhabitants, but finally the Austrians induced the Russians to withdraw.

One important consequence of the rebellion was the banishment of many rising politicians to Western Europe, where they were brought into contact with

a higher type of civilisation. Statesmen received their political training abroad, and returned to educate their countrymen.

The practice then began of sending Roumanian students to French, German, and Italian universities. To this fact we may attribute the rapid progress of Roumania as compared with the other Balkan States.

I may here incidentally remark that D. Stourdza in one of his articles strongly repudiates the assumption that Roumania is one of the Balkan States.[1]

The Treaty of Paris guaranteed the privileges of the two principalities, whilst still recognising the suzerainty of the Porte. As a little sop to their pride, part of Bessarabia, which had been taken by the Russians, was now restored to Moldavia.

The Great Powers at this stage decided to keep a protecting eye upon the two principalities, and therefore a European Commission was formed to revise the existing laws and statutes, taking at the same time into consideration the opinions of the representative councils of the country.

At the first sitting the councils voted unanimously for the union of the two principalities in a single state under the name of Roumania, to be governed by a foreign prince from one of the reigning houses of Europe.

To this the European Commission, recognising

[1] This view does not, however, by any means meet with general acceptance. In conversation recently with a highly-placed Roumanian of scholarly attainments, this gentleman argued convincingly that Roumania is, beyond doubt, one of the Balkan States. Every great movement in the Balkans, he pointed out, has originated in Roumania, or has at least been participated in by that country.

that union is strength, declined to agree, deciding that the principalities should continue to be governed by their own princes. But the Roumanians were too clever for the Commission, and succeeded in getting their own way by the simple device of both principalities electing the same prince, namely, Prince Cuza. And thus it was that the union of the two provinces was accomplished.

At the beginning of his reign Cuza reigned very wisely. Reforms in many departments were due to him, and he founded the universities of Bucarest and Jassy.

Later on he tried, unfortunately for himself, to concentrate all power in his own hands. This caused great dissatisfaction, and his dissolute conduct increased his unpopularity. The leading statesmen thereupon conspired to dethrone him. The palace was quietly entered one night, the Prince awakened out of sleep and informed of their decision. There was no use protesting. He allowed himself to be escorted to the frontier, then proceeded to Italy, where he died some years later. His widow returned to Roumania, and died there only a few years ago.

So secretly had the plans of Prince Cuza's deposal been carried out that very few people were aware of what had happened till next morning, when the news ran like wildfire through the capital. How his successor was appointed has been told in the romantic story of the advent of King Carol.

The siege of Plevna took place during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. The Russians sustained several defeats at the hands of the Turks, and the outlook for them was decidedly gloomy, when the

Roumanians under Prince Carol crossed the Danube and came to their help.

At first the Russians were inclined to treat the small Roumanian army with scant regard, considering it " a contemptible little army," but the soldiers soon showed of what mettle they were made (just as the men of our own " contemptible little army " did), and under the efficient leadership of Prince Carol speedily succeeded in turning the tide of victory.

One would have thought that the Russians would show themselves grateful to the friend in need. Their " gratitude " was shown by the announcement that they intended to regain possession of the portion of Bessarabia which had been ceded to Moldavia after the Crimean War, giving the Roumanians in exchange the Dobrudja as far as Constanza. As Bessarabia is a very fertile province, whilst the Dobrudja is just the contrary, this proposed exchange aroused great indignation at Bucarest, but, as is too often the case, might served instead of right, and the Roumanians were finally obliged to yield. For a long time after this relations with Russia were strained, some of the leading statesmen even trying to promote a better understanding with Austro-Hungary. But the strong anti-German feeling in the country worked against this, and finally various other causes contributed to a sort of passive preference for Russia.

CHAPTER XXXII

Turkish influence on Roumanian mind and manners—The origin of the people—Clearly descended from the Romans of Trajan's day—Collateral evidence of Latin origin in the language—Pride of race—Roumanian literature.

ALTHOUGH so many years have passed since the Roumanians shook off the yoke of the Turk, still many little indications remain to show that Turkish influence on mind and manners has not yet totally disappeared. For instance, I was quite amazed one day to learn that the mother of a highly placed official could neither read nor write. Asking for an explanation of this singular state of affairs, I was informed that the lady in question, being of the older generation, had been brought up when the country was still under Turkish influence. The Turkish women were never allowed to read or write, so all fear of intrigue outside the harem was thus avoided. Roumanian women of that time were brought up in a similar fashion. Of course, nowadays, even in Turkey, all this is changed: education has found its way into the harems; languages, music, and sciences are studied, with the result that Turkish women are amongst the most highly educated of the present time. Those who have read Pierre Loti's books on present-day life in Constantinople will understand the change that has taken place in the harems in regard to education.

Roumanian ladies of the present day are also highly educated.

It is not considered proper for a young Roumanian girl, or even a young married woman, to walk alone through the principal streets in Bucarest; and as to travelling alone, even a short distance, that is quite out of the question.

A young girl whom I knew was very stout, and took so little outdoor exercise that I expostulated with her mother. The mother then confided to me that she did not wish her daughter to be seen often out of doors; she preferred her to live a rather secluded life till she should become engaged. There again was an example of Turkish influence, as we all know how their women are forced to live a secluded life, and are never permitted to go on foot on the few occasions when they may go out of doors.

It is no part of my present purpose to deal at any length with the vexed question of the origin of the Roumanian people. I have both read and heard a great many views expressed on the subject, but as these have been of the most conflicting character they have not helped me much. The most stupid view of all is that persistently expressed by many ill-informed Germans, who, because they are aware that there is a certain Sclavonic element in the country, contend that the whole of the Roumanian people are Slavs.

The Roumanians are of course a Latin race—that is as clear as noonday. They are, however, like ourselves, a very mixed race. That fact is made sufficiently clear in the sketch I have given of the history of the country. Nations and tribes have overrun their land times innumerable, as other nations and

other tribes have overrun our own; but whilst "Saxon and Norman and Dane are we," with the characteristics of these races now well blended (except perhaps in some remote provincial quarters), the Roumanians have retained, in what must be considered a remarkable degree, the language and characteristics of the people from whom they have clearly sprung, viz. the Romans of Trajan's day.

It is not only to history that we may look for proof of this assertion. Were the history of the country unknown, its language would demonstrate the Latin origin of the people. It has much in common even with the Italian spoken in the present day; and as I am acquainted with that language, I would instance a great many words which could be readily understood by Roumanians, so much do they resemble their own equivalents. In fact, I had a friend from Genoa who was able to manage very well in Roumania, though only able to speak to the natives in her own language.

There is also something more than history and language to go upon. It is very easy for a superficial observer to form conclusions with regard to the Roumanians which are entirely wrong. The national indolence, the disinclination to engage in industrial or commercial occupations, so long responsible for failure to develop the resources of the country, render it difficult to appreciate the true character of the people. It is only when one comes to live constantly with them that one realises the pride of race which lies behind their careless demeanour. It was this pride which rendered the Germanisation of Roumania an impossible task

even for King Carol to accomplish, and which the enemy had to reckon with in the late war.

I have endeavoured in these pages to present as faithfully as was in my power a picture of the every-day life of the Roumanian people. If I have failed to give my readers an impression of a thoroughly lovable people, the failure is due to my lack of skill, and not to any lack of appreciation of their many fine qualities.

There are no warmer-hearted people in the world than our Roumanian allies. They are hospitable to an extraordinary extent, many of them keeping a perpetually open house for their friends. They are extremely charitable, and are invariably courteous and polite. Indeed, in their consideration for the feelings of others they evince a delicacy of perception which I have never seen equalled in any other people.

An Italian diplomat once told me that he did not wish for any preferment, lest it should necessitate his leaving Bucarest, and I could well understand his feelings.

Behind the *laissez-aller* which hinders endeavour, the Roumanians have a high order of intelligence. They have a quick appreciation of what is best in all that we mean by "progress," and are always ready to profit by the example of others who may be more advanced in some directions than themselves.

As I have indicated elsewhere, the Roumanians do not sufficiently cultivate their native language, which indeed is to a serious extent abandoned to the common people. Roumania has not produced very much literature in the past which might have served to keep alive an interest in the language, and

the modern writers who have utilised it in their works are few. The best known are perhaps the poets Eminescu, Alexandri, and Bolintineana. The works of the first-named have been translated into French and German, and those who are qualified to judge credit him with possessing the fire of genius. His work has been compared to that of Keats. V. Alexandri is *par excellence* the national poet. Bolintineana, who has achieved great popularity, is a writer of ballads.

It may be that Roumanians have now found a stimulus to higher endeavours, and will cease to be satisfied with a life of pleasure. But even when considering the love of gaiety which is so distinguishing a characteristic of the people, it is well to remember that they are never happy unless they can make all those with whom they come in contact happy also.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Conclusion

Roumania's object in the war — Hungary's attempt to Magyarise Transylvania—Sympathy of the Motherland—"Awake, Roumania!"—The new boundaries of Roumania—Room for her people—"The Little Entente"—Safeguarding the peace of Europe.

EVERYONE, I should think, would be fully aware by now of the aims which decided Roumania to intervene in the late war. To regain Transylvania and see it incorporated in Roumania has always been the ardent desire of every Roumanian, young and old. In olden times the province formed part of the Roman province of Dacia under the Emperor Trajan. In the eleventh century the Hungarians made themselves masters of the land, which was then administered as a Hungarian province. In still later years Transylvania was for a time a free country; but in 1868 it was once more given into the power of Hungary by Franz Joseph, the late Emperor of Austria. From that time the Magyarisation of the principality was steadily carried on, in spite of the bitter discontent of the Roumanian element, which was by far the most numerous.

The Hungarian Government, it is true, faithfully promised to respect the language, religion, and nationality of the Roumanians in the country, but

that promise was not kept. Hungarian alone was recognised as the official language, and laws were passed within the past few years aiming at the Magyarisation of Roumanian schools. Efforts were even made to suborn the Roumanian clergy so that they might help to this end.

The administration of the province passed altogether into the hands of the Hungarians. The authorities controlled the elections so effectively that the Roumanian element had no adequate representation in the Hungarian Parliament. Considering that there were between three and four million Roumanians in the country, justice demanded that they should have adequate representation, but it was never conceded to them. The Roumanians naturally did not take this treatment as a matter of course. They protested most energetically both at public meetings and through the press. How often have their public men been obliged to flee the country and take refuge in Roumania for fear of the consequences of their over-free speech!

When I was in Bucarest I made the acquaintance of a professor from Transylvania who had been obliged to leave everything and depart, as he had been too free in his criticisms of Hungarians and their methods. According to their law, a certain number of years had to pass (five, I think) before he would be permitted to re-enter the country.

About thirty years ago there was formed a Roumanian National party, whose aims were to preserve the Roumanian language, Church, and schools, and also to restore autonomy to Transylvania under the suzerainty of the Hungarian king-

dom. The petition of this party was refused, and the leaders of the movement were severely punished. After that the feeling became much more acute, every fresh act of aggression on the part of the Hungarians calling forth demonstrations of sympathy for their countrymen from the inhabitants of Roumania. How often have I been awakened on such occasions by the crowd parading the streets singing "Destaaptate-Romane!" ("Awake, Roumania!"), the national song of the Roumanians in Transylvania, which was forbidden to be sung there under severe penalties! When staying in Kronstadt I often used to begin to sing this song unthinkingly, and what a chorus of "hushes" used to stifle my efforts!

I began to write this book whilst the war was still raging and my friends in Roumania were undergoing terrific trials. I have no intention of dealing here with the sad times which now belong to the past. I prefer to think of the hopeful future of the country in which so much of my life was spent.

It is reassuring to know that in the new maps of Europe, rendered necessary by the decisions of the Treaty of Versailles, the boundaries of Roumania enclose as far as appears to be possible the whole of the Roumanian people, with as few alien elements as possible included.

There remain without the boundaries, in the Tinok Valley, the Western Banat, and in Macedonia, some five millions of the Roumanian people who will be included in Jugo-Slavia; and, east of the Dneister, another five hundred thousand will be included in Russia.

Many alien elements will remain in Roumania.

The Jews, who, like the poor, are always with us, will continue to be represented by a million of their race. A great colony of Hungarians still occupies a territory in East Transylvania; whilst a German population which settled in Transylvania, Banat, Bukovina, and Bessarabia at various periods from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries numbers about eight hundred thousand.

There will still be found some Bulgarians, Turks, and Tartars in the south of Bessarabia and the Dobrudja; Serbs, Poles, and Ukranians where Roumania adjoins Jugo-Slavia, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, and the Ukraine; and a considerable number of Russian refugees belonging to a strange religious sect called "Shoptchi," who fled from their own country to avoid persecution.

Of Roumania's present seventeen million population it may be said that some fourteen millions are pure Roumanians. Outside the country's boundaries Roumanians number over one million.

When we compare these figures with those which referred to pre-war Roumania we will find that the country has cause to rejoice.

In 1916 Roumania had only eight million inhabitants, seven and a half millions of whom were nationals, constituting only half the race. The remaining half were citizens of alien countries.

If the ideals of the enlightened Foreign Minister, M. Take Jonescu (who has always been such a sincere friend of Britain), are realised, a most important step will have been taken in the direction of safeguarding the peace of Europe. One may hope, indeed, that the clouds which lowered so persistently over the Balkans will disappear for ever.

Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia, M. Jonescu has pointed out, have already entered into a defensive alliance; and he hopes that not only Roumania, but Greece and Poland also, may join it, and that the three defeated countries, Bulgaria, Austria, and Hungary, may ultimately become members.

The maintenance of the different treaties entered into since the war will of course be the great purpose of what M. Jonescu has described as "The Little Entente"; but underlying this endeavour will be a sincere desire to establish such personal relations as will facilitate the settlement of various differences which are bound to arise from time to time.

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